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FIVE SERMONS
ON THE
NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

FIVE SERMONS
ON THE
NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY,
PREACHED IN
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS TIDE, 1846,
BEFORE THE
University of Cambridge.

BY
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P R E F A C E.

THE topics opened in the first of the following Discourses, and pursued, but in particular and insulated illustrations, in those that follow in the series, might well admit a more thorough and methodic treatment. The preacher's consciousness of this must be his chief apology to those respected members of his University who have strongly desired this publication, for not having without some delay and vacillation thus given them at length in print, what he thought not unworthy of their attention from the pulpit.

The subject of development, though not so prominent before the public eye as when these Sermons were delivered, has lost nothing of its theological interest and importance. In the enlarged use of the word to which we have been lately familiarized,—there are some serious and earnest minds who would scruple acknowledging its reality, even in those successive economies of religion in which our greatest divines have recognized it, and which the gradual accomplishment of the Divine purposes in our redemption has distinguished as markedly and organically from each other, as the seed from the plant : there are those

who would suspect, as impeaching the immutability of the Divine law and purpose, a distinction which in reality implies no change in the Dispenser, but only in the capacities of the human recipient. Against such thinkers there is no distinct and formal argument in this volume : but the view opposed to theirs is implied throughout, and in the third and fourth Sermons particularly : while in the first and third it is expressly maintained against those who have gone out from us, that development, in this enlarged acceptance of the term, has no place in the final dispensation of Christianity.

In the assertion that the nature and genius of Christianity are to be sought in the *facts* it reveals to us,—and that in contradistinction to the conclusions or deductions which have been conceived to comprise the entire purport or idea of the facts,—some readers may think they see a verbal approximation to a theory on which the sentiment of the Church has been recently and powerfully expressed. The resemblance, as it will be readily seen, is verbal only : in the whole meaning attached to the words there is not only difference, but contrariety. For whereas the attempt of the present Discourses is to exhibit those facts in their definite dogmatic statement, as the Church has ever objectively contemplated them, and received her moral impress from them ; the aim of that theory was to represent all endeavours at defining the facts as based on false philosophy, and to reduce us to an utter

indistinctness in the survey of them. The deductions which that theory deprecated were the definitions and statements by which the facts here asserted as supreme in the revelation were secured, in the progress of thought, from virtual contradiction: whereas the conclusions deprecated in these Sermons are those which set aside, or at least undervalue, the facts, in comparison with what is assumed to comprise all that is important in their spirit and purpose. It is scarcely possible to touch on some branches of this subject without coming into collision with several cherished views of later times: and though it has been the earnest desire of the author to avoid controversy, and most especially within the pale of our Church, he has not been so happy as to escape it.

It was not known to the Author till after his course was begun, that the Christmas Sermon was allotted by usage to the select preacher of December, as well as those for the Sundays preceding and following. This will account for the Sermon on the Nativity being placed after the Sermon on S. John, as not being in the order first contemplated. The publication of this has been requested, no less than of the other Sermons.

SERMON I.

THE WORD INCARNATE THE ESSENTIAL BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY.

(Preached the Second Sunday in Advent, 1846.)

1 S. JOHN I. 1, 2, 3.

THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING,—WHICH WE HAVE
HEARD, WHICH WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES, WHICH
WE HAVE LOOKED UPON, AND OUR HANDS HAVE HANDLED
OF THE WORD OF LIFE, (FOR THE LIFE WAS MANIFESTED,
AND WE HAVE SEEN IT, AND BEAR WITNESS, AND SHOW
UNTO YOU THAT ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH WAS WITH THE
FATHER, AND WAS MANIFESTED UNTO US,)—THAT WHICH
WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD DECLARE WE UNTO YOU, THAT
YE ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US, AND TRULY
OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER, AND WITH HIS
SON JESUS CHRIST.

THE question, What is the idea of Christianity?
—or, in more popular language, What is Chris-
tianity?—is singularly congenial to the taste of an
age addicted alike to free inquiry and to the love of
generalization. Considering our religion simply as
a great fact in the world's history, the thoughtful
investigator of the past, and the politic director of

the present concerns of human society, should appear alike interested in determining what element, if any, it is which constitutes its essential idea—which comprehends its living genius and spirit, and thus lies at the root of all its real power of affecting and influencing mankind.

A question attractive on these grounds to those who choose to view the religion of CHRIST as from without, as they would behold anything extraneous or even indifferent to themselves—must have its interest also to those who cannot take in this light the subject matter of revelation; who have what they esteem the great happiness and satisfaction of accepting its substance as presented to them; whose faith is not the result of their philosophic inquiries into the bearing of Divine truth, but rather the basis and starting point of such inquiries. It is possible that the question we have proposed may not have been at all entertained by these persons; and, when it is propounded to them, it is conceivable that they may differ as to the manner in which they would be disposed to reply to it, or even as to the possibility of offering any conclusive reply. Yet the question agitated in these recent ages cannot bear an indifferent meaning to their ears, whether there be what may be termed a leading idea of the Gospel—a *form* (in scholastic language) constituting it to be what it is; and if so, what is that form? Where are we to look for that which, truly received by the mind, comprises all that is essential in the

word of life offered to man—which, if missed, leaves nothing but what is worthless or counterfeit ?

I propose in this discourse, and the following, to remark upon several answers that are commonly given to this question, and compare them with the unchanged record of truth now before us. The Apostolic sentence which I have prefixed as the text of our discussion, is one which, if an answer be indeed possible to the inquiry, might be expected more than almost any other to supply or to suggest that answer. Nor can we better commence the subject, than with the devout wish and prayer, that the same Eternal Life which was from the beginning and was manifested in time to men, may impart its own living spirit to our argument,—that in this, as in all other religious works, our fellowship may be with the FATHER, and the SON, and with the whole body of those who through the Apostles' testimony have believed truly until this day.

If there be any appropriate time for the Church to entertain the question, What is the idea of our Divine Founder's religion ? it is assuredly the season of Advent ; when after having added another year to our annual survey of the path of that Founder, traced from His Nativity and Circumcision to His Glorification, and Mission of the Divine Comforter, with all the momentous moral considerations which result from this, we are preparing to trace the same course anew, from its first dawning commencement. Beginning as we now do from

that point of view in which the most distant of the generations that are past had the vista of futurity dimly thrown before them ; the first coming of the Redeemer as far as it was apprehended, described as in conjunction and apparent identity with His Advent as final Redeemer and Judge,—it is thus we prepare to behold the obscure and general anticipations of Patriarchs and Prophets first finding their objective realization in the Babe that was born at Bethlehem. And amidst the adoring thanksgiving which that object calls forth in the Christian mind, viewed in connexion with the mysteries of salvation He was to accomplish, and the kingdom of grace which He was to extend to all the families of mankind, some will now be found to raise the question, whether there be not a general idea or form of truth which unites in one the faith of the most explicit and the most remote believer here ? If the idea be concluded to be formally and essentially identical in the ages that preceded and those that have succeeded the LORD's coming, there will then follow the further question whether, as the idea clearly admitted of development under the Patriarchal, and Mosaic, and Prophetic dispensations, it may not be further developed under the Christian. And then the question occurs, of what nature is this last development ? whether, if anything more than the requisite adaptation of the same truth to different scenes or different states of the world, it be in the same direction with the antecedent development, or

in the contrary one :—whether, as that confessedly was, it be an accretion of new fact or new dogma to the preceding system of religion,—or whether, as an opposite class of thinkers contend, it be the removal of what was before : that whereas in the infancy of the world the advance was from general and obscure views to a distinct impersonation of Divinity to man,—so, in the highest progress of human reason, there may be a retreat from the particular to the general ;—that as the possession of universal truth must needs be more important than of facts which are only exemplifications of it, the highest spiritual enlightenment may require that explicit dogmatic belief should give way at last to that which is alone essential to the Gospel, in which all preceding dispensations, Christian, Hebrew, or Gentile, find their common ground of devotion and morality.

Both these views of the development of Christianity are conceived and disseminated among ourselves : and as illustrating from such opposite quarters the character of that speculation which sets ideal creations in place of a body of objective truth delivered to the Church ; it is not uninstruc- tive to observe them even on the first entrance on our inquiry. For it is remarkable that while the idea of Christianity is a main topic in both extremes of this speculation, while the correct preservation of the idea or essential type is with good reason made the very first of the tests by which, in a well-known recent treatise, a true development of doctrine is to

be distinguished from a false development or a corruption, so that the ascertainment of this should appear the most necessary preliminary to any real grappling with the matter at issue; this idea or essential type is itself no where defined. It is taken as something intuitively perceived by the mind—something to be felt rather than analysed or reduced to definition: and in that application of the test alluded to by which it is sought to identify the later forms of Roman Christianity with that of the first three centuries, the sameness of type is elaborately argued not from anything internal in the respective Christians themselves,—not from their words or works, their lives or their deaths,—but from the similarity of the impression they severally made on prejudiced or hostile strangers.* Now how far it is antecedently credible that the same essential type should thus produce a precisely similar image when seen imperfectly and incorrectly from without, and from aspects differing so widely in many most momentous particulars, I will not stop to inquire. My present business is not with the soundness or cogency of this ingenious pleading: but rather with the difficulty which is evinced by this circumstance to hang over the first and most essential element of reasoning on this subject. It should seem to be in despair of supplying an internal analysis to Christianity—even as subjective in the individuals holding it—that a mind thus eminently conversant with the matter, should

* Newman's Essay, p. 204—242.

turn from the living substance to a baseless shadow : seeking in the odious suspicions and calumnies of the enemies of CHRIST's Church, a proof of the identity of the Christianity they abhorred with whatever may be seen to excite similar sentiments at present.

But let us return at length from this digression to the answers actually offered to the question, what is the essential form or genius of our religion—and see whether these in proportion to their greater confidence will supply us with more light in the obscurity thus apparently hanging over our subject. A large class of persons, and those not the least influential, or the least fluent in speech, will tell us that the idea of Christianity is that of human improvement :—that the civilization of the age is its Christianity, that advances in arts and science, in government and general freedom of intercourse constitute, far more than any doctrines whatever, the genius and spirit of the beneficent religion we profess : by these, as the most efficient missionaries, should it be presented to those who are unenlightened either within or without Christendom ; these things imparting much more in the present time to the dogmatic element of religion than they in former ages ever received from it. The persons who thus confidently speak do not generally concern themselves to analyse the civilization to which so much is ascribed, into its moral and material parts : they do not seem even to entertain the question whether it be or be not a purely moral element pervading our fabric of

civilization which constitutes its great distinctive character from that of the cultivated nations of antiquity, and forms its chief superiority over that which is now seen in China or Japan : still less do they concern themselves to inquire how that moral element has been maintained or has yet to be maintained, without whose continued presence and ascendancy, our civilization, however superior still to others in the appliances of human power and intelligence, may become morally no better, or perhaps worse, than that of classic heathenism. Yet all these questions require to be disposed of, before that can be admitted as the essential form of CHRIST's religion, which all its earnest followers esteem to be one only, and that not its principal function : the exhibition of the power of the true God on a field which other agencies had assayed, and not without signal, though yet inferior success before : the absorption of the serpents whom the enchanters' rods had produced by that one who was called into being by the commissioned Priest of the Most High. If it be leaven from the stores of the Nazarene householder that has penetrated, and is penetrating the inert mass of this world's society, till all become the kingdoms of God and of His CHRIST, — if consequently the whole efficiency of this operation must be with them who, impregnated themselves with the principles imbibed from the Divine Teacher, and His Apostles, are perpetually superior to the world they invisibly influence : then

are these in Scripture language the salt of the earth, which alone Christianizes our institutions and the working of them: were the Church of God to expire—or were these its elect members to fail from it, to lose their savour utterly and become as the world—the business of civilization might indeed remain, the activity of political, commercial, and scientific life might continue in full vigour as before; but nothing would remain to transmit to after ages that undying flame of hope and continued sympathy which we have received from those whose ashes surround us: nothing would remain to tell a better tale to the distant future, than the extinct glories of Egypt and Tyre tell to the wondering beholder now.

A different, and assuredly a far better answer to the inquiry, is that which places the idea of Christianity in charity,—the spirit of love to God, and of universal love to man. It is an answer to which no exception could have been made, had the question, instead of relating to the substantial form of the religion divinely revealed to us, been merely what is the subjective essence of that religion in its true recipients,—or, what is the vital principle to which every act of the Christian life is to be referred. Neither would we now be understood as objecting in the least to the statement that love is the essential idea of Christianity, except it be taken with that perverse limitation in which it is too clear that many are determined to understand it,—*i. e.* excluding the exhibition of Divine love to man,

which is its most essential basis, and making the recognition of the obligation of such love in ourselves to be the only essential point of its teaching. Against this understanding of our religion, we are bound to protest in the name of that Christian love itself, which it leaves without root and without nourishment,—in the name of the author of my text, the Apostle of Love, whose earnest and repeated asseverations are thus plainly contravened,—in the name rather of his Divine Master and ours, whose love, the sole cause and principle of all Christian charity, is thus made of secondary or inferior moment in the conception of His religion. The experience of the last eighteen centuries will sufficiently tell by whom has that spirit been exemplified, which willingly sacrifices ease and plenty, and liberty and life itself in ministering to the needs and the wretchedness of others : it is from men imbued with the spirit of JESUS CHRIST and the mysteries of His religion, that such acts have proceeded : and little indeed shall we find to rival or supersede their examples, where these living sources of mercy and benignity have been exchanged for a philanthropy of modern growth and aspect,—one whose first ostentatious profession is—indifference to all creeds and doctrinal religion. May we not discern a moral blindness in those who speculate on this Divine virtue of charity, or universal love, apart from that which is its great exemplification and cause ? What for instance, but the most intense moral blindness

could have led any one to select as exemplifying this diffusive love, voluptuaries whom juster heathen morals have consigned to utter contempt and abhorrence? what else could induce many mentally to tolerate such perversion, to imagine the tender and benevolent affections fostered by courses which, as all theory, and all experience testify, lead only to deaden and extinguish them?

If then all answers are necessarily imperfect, if not scientifically inaccurate, which exhibit only the subjective character of the religion whose idea we are now inquiring into; as little can we admit those as satisfactory, which describe the dispensation of Christianity under some one of the titles it bears in the prophetic Scriptures, as a kingdom or polity for instance. Unhesitatingly as this is to be admitted into our conception of CHRIST's religion, and that not only as a form of its well being, but of its proper subsistence in the world, it cannot from its very nature supply what we require; which is the distinctive character of *this* kingdom,—the ideal form or type by which it is to be distinguished from all other societies or kingdoms of men. And though it is to incorporation in this society, that the possession of the common type of Christianity in the individual is referable as a fact—yet cannot it be reduced to this as its ideal principle, without subverting the proper order of conception as to this kingdom of CHRIST, and the laws of its spiritual incorporation. Those who in their concern for this particular aspect

of the Gospel dispensation, allow no legitimate motive or ground for receiving even the essential verities of religion, than their proposition by a particular authority ; and who will not allow them otherwise to be received in any true sense at all : these dogmatists render themselves, not without reason, liable to the charge from their extreme opponents of advancing claims more savouring of the arrogance of CHRIST'S adversary, than the humility of His allowed representatives : for such undoubtedly it should appear to sink the importance of the message in that of its bearer or instrument of conveyance. For ourselves we would willingly attach a meaning far short of such impiety, even to this extravagant pretension : we would ascribe it to the confidence felt in the attachment of the LORD'S promise to a particular channel, the non-recognition of which, must in the view of these persons, involve in the evils of schism, and thus impair the good effect of the truth which is still believed. But however this may be, (on which may the Judge of all direct the hearts of those who would be His servants !) it is impossible for us to recognize as essential to the Christian polity, claims which the ancient Church either knew not or disclaimed, and which have never been admitted by the whole Catholic body : equally, or yet more impossible is it to conceive the foundation of faith at all different at present from what it has been from the beginning. And it may help to confirm our attachment to that rule of faith, when in

those who have to our sorrow abandoned us here, we find their newly-acquired zeal for a creative authority in doctrine, accompanied with an inclination to perplex or disturb all which they had themselves most desired to settle before. Who can but grieve bitterly to see that great moral disorder of our present intellectual world, the idolatry of *power* as such, so apparently exemplified even here ; when in the single aspect of what is collectively strong, imposing, and influential, the sense is thus deadened and obscured of what is simply and permanently true ?

But after thus surveying the answers which persons intent on favorite theories, or at best, partial views of truth, have offered to the question,—What is the idea of Christianity ? it is now assuredly time to ask whether the Church of God has any answer to the question. It were wrong to say that no such answer had been given : when the earliest care of the Church was to define against heretics that essential verity of Christian faith, without the possession of which, all professed belief in the sources of revelation was pronounced inadequate and unavailing. And yet in the sense in which many now expect the question to be resolved, it is certain no answer is or can be returned by the Catholic Christian ; I mean that what he considers as the essential truth of CHRIST's religion, will never be allowed by him to be resolved into any other truth more general and comprehensive than itself. But let me now unfold and demonstrate this point : and let the Holy

Scriptures be, as they ever should, the main support, and groundwork of our argument.

What then says the beloved disciple of JESUS CHRIST in my text, as to the truth by which alone men are joined to the Apostolic fellowship, and by which in that fellowship they are saved? He distinctly declares this to be the believing reception of that Eternal Life, which once hidden in the bosom of the Eternal FATHER from all created sight, was in the later ages manifested to mankind in the person of the Eternal SON. The Life thus manifested—the Word of Life in S. John’s discourses is no *Ens Rationis*, no ideal conception of the higher faculties exclusively: it was what he and his followers had seen and looked upon, and handled: it was in other words a true and visible, and palpable Incarnation of the Eternal Word,—very Man of man, even as He was very GOD of GOD. And that we may not mistake the importance of this; not only does the holy Apostle thus present it with singular reiteration of speech as certain matter of fact, but he makes it also inseparable from the ideal conception of that truth by which alone we are sanctified and saved. “Every spirit that confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh is of GOD: and every spirit that confesseth not that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh is not of GOD:” and this, as he continues to state, is that spirit of Antichrist which was then already in the world—the antichristianism in his view, lying in this,—that in denying the SON, *i. e.*,

the SON as actually Incarnate—this spirit did in effect deny the FATHER also.

The truth therefore which the Apostles called on every one to confess, was not an opinion, or a conclusion, or a sentiment, but a fact : the fact that HE Who was in the beginning with God and was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us : that it was HE, the SON of God and principle of eternal life, that lived and suffered, that died and rose again as the Gospels tell, for our salvation from sin and death : that it is HE Whom now seated in the glory of the FATHER we expect to come again to judgment. A fact which received as a truth, necessarily makes all other facts insignificant in comparison, which as a fact, and as a fact only is the object of what is properly termed faith or belief, and which cannot, without altering the whole nature of that belief, be taken as the mere expression of any general ideal truth, this *fact* it is which Christian faith is required to receive, and which, *thus received*, becomes the centre and principle of Christian love and purity and righteousness. And while to pursue this to its consequences in the Christian life, was the concern of the individual believer, the prime concern of those who watched for their souls, the ministers and stewards of Divine mysteries, was to preserve inviolate the belief of this great fact. Nor is there any zeal for its correct statement and reception, any anathema of those who would remove or invalidate its meaning, in the records, now so frequently cen-

sured and condemned, of subsequent Christendom, which has not its approved precedent in the words of this Apostle, the specially beloved of his Lord, the incessant inculcator of Christian meekness and charity.

If this then be the great fact of revelation which, dimly shadowed forth in the preparatory dispensations of religion, was at length fully brought to light in the Christian,—if in this final dispensation explicit faith in this great object holds the place which was before supplied by implicit and believing submission to the inferior tutorage then afforded to the people of God,—the question which I once before proposed to your notice, now recurs upon us, and demands resolution. Is the development which was thus plainly applicable to the religion of the patriarchal believer, or of the Jew, equally applicable to the religion of the Christian? Is that process of improvement and perfection capable of being continued, either in the same direction as before, or in a different one? And our answer to this question is distinctly negative. Development of a certain kind there doubtless may be, and is, even in Christian doctrine; I mean development in the strictest sense of the word, of which the limits are immovably fixed, and may readily be understood by all men: but development in any way analogous to that by which the undisclosed germ of things under the covenant of Adam, of Noah, or even of Abraham, of Moses, or David, sprang up to what was

in form and kind unknown before, such development implying improvement and actual change, cannot possibly be predicated of the faith of the Gospel, without impeaching the perfection and the finality which are its attributes. And whether the development be conceived to be, like the former admitted one, an accretion of new fact and dogma, constituting a creed more accurate in substance, and more varied in extent than what formerly existed,—or whether on the contrary it be conceived to be a retreat from all particularities of creed to what is alone universal, invariable, and eternal,—the development under either view is alike inadmissible, its pretence of legitimacy unfounded and demonstrably untrue.

For take first the notion of an enlarged development of doctrine, by which it is now imagined that there may be an indefinite expansion of the Faith once delivered to the Saints, as the mind of the Church is exercised on its topics, and by meditation moulds and shapes them continually. Now, as I have first stated, it were idle to deny that developments in the proper and strict sense have their place even in the articles of Christian faith; when they encounter fresh modes of thought in the same subject matter, or fresh forms of evasion and virtual denial. Under these circumstances a statement of doctrine may be made widely different in form from that in which the self-same doctrine was originally propounded, being framed for the distinct purpose

of meeting a certain mode of thought, in existence or in near prospect, which was not thus present to the first promulgators. But who does not discern in every statement of this kind, the most careful renunciation of all claim to novelty of proposition, the most confident asseveration that here is but the logical explication of what was actually in the mind of the Apostles of CHRIST, and had been holden implicitly from the first by the simplest of believers in their word? Such are all ecclesiastical definitions; such at least do all profess to be, those of Trent by no means forming any exception: but it is something vastly transcending this, which is put forth under the name of development now. It is a process by which, even in the fundamental mysteries of faith, the purest, nay the most deeply reasoned, and matured belief of Christians is left to be corrected as well as amplified by the advanced enlightenment of the times that follow: so that when even an Athanasius could speak (with the Scriptures,) of the limitation of human knowledge in the Incarnate SON, the improved theology of later times, it appears, is entitled to censure the sentiment as though impeaching His Divine Personality.* It is a process by which the mind of the Church stirred to reflect on the mysteries of Divinity, descries, as we are told, a vacant throne in heaven, a throne of the highest created majesty, to which, because heresy had assayed to affix a wrong occupant, Catholicism must

* Essay on Development, p. 354.

therefore provide a fitting one : so that thenceforward language might be correctly applied to S. Mary, which before a discovery so marvellously effected, had been only applied by Christians to the humanity of her Divine Son : and whereas the Primitive Church had prayed for all Saints departed, and for the Blessed Virgin Mary in particular, that they with all whom we individually remember might like S. Paul's deceased friend, find mercy of the LORD in the great day, and form the glorious company of the elect ; this primitive notion is developed into the different or rather the opposite notion which makes the former saints no longer the recipients, but the dispensers of that grace to the rest, as having themselves obtained a deification through the deity of the Incarnate LORD.* Further still, it is a process by which intense meditation on the subjective needs of the believer, is made to call forth, and actually produce, the precise dogmatic statements which meet those several wants or aspirations : and by doctrines thus created as it were from within, the matters of mere external revelation are so overlaid, that the Apostles' Creed, once propounded as comprising all the necessary belief of the Christian, becomes avowedly an "incomplete summary," or rather a "mere sample," and that chiefly of the more elementary parts of that belief.† And no wonder, when even the ample fabric of mediæval scholastic theology is insufficient for the crav-

* Essay on Development, p. 599—407. † P. 107.

ing of purely modern times: where not only new modes of devotion, such as that of the Sacred Heart, but new ratifications of doctrines once disputed, nay actually rejected by the Church's approved doctors, such as that of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, attest the undiminished luxuriance and the potency of this so-called development. Such is the picture now drawn of the legitimate evolution of Christian doctrine: a picture more resembling the growth of Brahmanical theology and science from the dissimilar stock of the Vedas, as Indian gymnosophists love to describe it, than the genuine developments of that faith which the Apostles once for all planted in the earth.

For to the Christian estimation of this theory, it is assuredly sufficient to notice the dilemma in which it involves those who would be its supporters. If this be indeed the right and predestined course of Christian doctrine, the chosen Apostles of our LORD were either ignorant altogether of facts and principles essential to the full perfection of the religion they were empowered to disseminate, or else they purposely withheld, and withheld altogether—from the Church as well as from the world,—the influential doctrines which they knew. The latter side of the alternative goes beyond any view of the *disciplina arcani* which the boldest have yet ventured to maintain: while the former, which should therefore seem the inevitable conclusion, is what no Christian has yet asserted, what is not even now

distinctly asserted, of those to whom the Incarnate Truth said before HE left the world, "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends: for *all things that I* have heard of My FATHER, I have *made known to you*." And little will either side of the alternative suit the actual history of the doctrine of which these its commissioned promulgators said, that either to add or to take away was to incur the forfeiture of its blessing; to preach it any otherwise than as it was received, whether by addition or by diminution, was equally to incur an anathema. Great then as our satisfaction may be at finding the doctrines of purgatorial fire, and others which we have for the last three centuries treated as unknown to primitive Christianity, now at last confessed to be so, even from the ranks of our opponents; our satisfaction will be alloyed by more painful thoughts, should this perilous line of defence be authoritatively adopted by the communion on whose behalf it is employed. Far better for them—far better for the hope of the reunion of Christendom—that the errors with which Catholic religion has been adulterated, should be conceived honestly, however untruly, to have been received by tradition from JESUS CHRIST and His Apostles, than that they should be thus accepted and defended as the legitimated addition of after ages to their teaching; that all the great truths we hold in common, should be thus fearfully compromised by a process of continued amplification and interminable change.

But is this view of the development of Christianity, the only one which should provoke our censure, or awaken our fears lest the rising generation become infected with its principle? Are we zealous against a system which may lead to believe too much in connexion with a recognized revelation; and is it with silent indifference if not with tolerant favour that we suffer serious negations of the Catholic truth received by our Church; and amongst them, that view to which, whether we see it or not, we are then all inevitably hastening, the view which places the true development of Christianity in its throwing off gradually from itself the dogmatic principle, and evincing itself as the manifestation of pure reason in man? Such partiality, if it exist, can only proceed from unacquaintance with the actual signs of the times in which we live: if it betray not sympathy with one of its most contagious influences, and insensibility to the truth transmitted to our guardianship from the believing ages that are past. For assuredly if the Incarnation of the Son of God were a truth once, it is no less a truth now; if its reception or rejection were in the days of S. John and S. Paul, a matter of vast spiritual concernment for good or for evil, the lapse of ages cannot make it otherwise at present, however different the sphere of operation in which our faith or our unbelief have to manifest themselves. If it were then a vanity and an impiety to say that "the resurrection is past already," in other words that the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh, of which

the resuscitation of the Incarnate SON was the great palpable and visible pledge, was a truth resolvable entirely into moral renovations and quickenings of the higher principle in man,—or again, to say that there was no true coming in the flesh of the Principle that is indestructible and eternal,—but only one of many emanations of light, and life and purity, by which the ETERNAL manifests Himself apparently, and that continually, for the rescue of His reasonable offspring from the tyranny of the carnal principle,—then it can be no other than a vanity and an impiety to make corresponding assertions now. I would not overstate the exactness of the correspondence that exists here: the later speculators may not have the same opinions respecting matter as the source of evil in which the subtle inquiries of earnest minded Gentiles have usually terminated; they may want accordingly many of the features that were stamped on the Gnostic ideas of Christianity: and their hostility to the facts of the Judaical religion may proceed on a different ground from that of those ancient professors of science falsely so called. But in the abstract and generic character which they attach to that mystery in which human redemption is involved, in the reduction of the Incarnation to a mode of something else of which their *gnosis* was the only exponent, the ancient and modern speculators are agreed. And in the contempt with which the Gnostic of old regarded the Apostolic believer, and, possessed in his own esteem of the principle of

universal truth, saw nothing but idiotic perverseness in the other's objective religion, his strict Church-fellowship, and his willingness to endure hardship and persecution in this cause,—we may perhaps discern a parallel to the feeling entertained towards the same Catholic principles and their abettors by the professed disciples of a more philosophic Christianity.

Yet it is to the children of the Church, the adherents of the symbols of objective faith, that we owe the transmission of the name and the power of Christianity to our times ; and while those pretenders to Divine knowledge, with their endless subdivisions of sentiment, soon faded from the earth, and became as though they had never been, these leavened the world with the sanctifying influences of Christianity, and on the ruins of the heathenism which they conquered by patient endurance, planted the Cross of CHRIST and the ordinances of His religion. Let us not mistake the party we have to choose, or imagine that the spirit which loves to impute to these men as a body—earthen vessels as they confessedly were—narrow-mindedness or ignorance of their religion, will long spare the Apostles of JESUS CHRIST. There are, indeed, those amongst us, who, too much occupied with temporary fears and animosities to look far into the reality of things, honestly believe that to decry Ancient Christianity is to honour its Founder and His earliest messengers. Their favourite view shall be

examined hereafter ; but these persons, if sincere in attachment to their own cherished symbols, must discern ere long to their sorrow whose cause they are alone serving, and to whom they are allying themselves—the rationalist enemies to every description of doctrinal belief. No. If CHRIST's promise of perpetual presence has had any fulfilment, it was with those, with that society, who after testifying, as we have seen, to the reality of objective belief against the professors of a scientific Christianity out of their pale, expelled also from their own body, as soon as it arose there, the assignment of any lower meaning to its great object of faith, the Incarnate GODHEAD ; and who afterwards, with equal care, guarded against every mode by which this fundamental mystery was evaded or denied ; who, instead of the assertion now deemed compatible with evangelic belief, that CHRIST JESUS was the Man whom the Divine Word most perfectly inhabited, and who most realized the idea of the union of Man with God, demanded strictly and sternly the confession that HE was the very Divine Word made Flesh—the LORD from Heaven, who *became* the second Adam for our redemption.

If, finally, it be said or thought that times are altered, that what became ages and societies athirst for information concerning the unseen, little suits an age like the present—where the attention and reverence, once occupied by religious teaching alone, is now reserved for those who can best instruct man-

kind as to their social and economical well-being—may we not, while fully admitting the fact, deny the consequence? The inconsequence will be evident to all whom severe studies have adequately disciplined; it will be felt by all whom a higher truth has touched. Great and excellent in their sphere as may be the advances in political and social improvement, the gulph which separates them from the world unseen is unpassed, is impassable as ever; the region to which those we loved have been removed, and in which we must ourselves ere long be, is as unreachd by our power of social arrangement as it is unexplored by our highest science. The wonders which this last has brought within the sphere of human knowledge are in vain invoked for any other purpose than that which they indeed admirably answer, of displaying the boundless power and wisdom of the CREATOR of all worlds, and the littleness of our whole being in comparison with His. But if the insignificance of our troubles in this comparison is to be their consolation, (as some of note now confidently tell us) will not experience bitterly reclaim, that from this consideration unsupported, the gloomiest answer only can follow to the Psalmist's question, "LORD, what is man?"—the thought that in the eye of that Infinite Intelligence which holds the stars in their courses, the man's cares and wretchedness can be of no account, can occupy no place whatever; that in the vast ocean of fluctuating existence his joys and

complaints are swept away unheeded, unregarded by the Omnipotent. If there be any consolation, it is assuredly in that which these speculations cannot reach, which it is well if they overlook not or despise—the truth by which the Psalmist's question is actually met—the truth of God *Incarnate*; God sympathizing with our human condition, alleviating our troubles by sharing them, removing our sins, the great embitterers of all trouble, by expiating them; victorious on our behalf over man's last enemy, and disarming death of its sting. This revelation of God it is for Christianity—for Catholic Christianity—alone to impart; and while other manifestations of the DIVINITY may also instruct, this alone converts and heals. That Word of life eternal which was from the beginning, but which human eyes have seen and human hands have handled—that INCARNATE WORD which the Apostles witnessed, is by the Church declared to us, that our fellowship may be with them, with the FATHER, and with His SON JESUS CHRIST.

SERMON II.

THE WORD INCARNATE IN THE TOTALITY OF
HIS EXHIBITION IN THE CHURCH, THE TRUE
CENTRE OF CHRISTIANITY.

(Preached the Third Sunday in Advent, 1846.)

1 S. JOHN I. 3.

THAT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD DECLARE WE
UNTO YOU, THAT YE ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH
US. AND TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER
AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.

IN reviewing in my last discourse several answers that have been proposed to the question “What is Christianity?” my endeavour was throughout to show that the true answer must be found in the statement which opens this Epistle of S. John ; and that it is to a fact, not a principle or a sentiment, that our heaven-instructed witness of truth here directs us, as comprising the ideal essence of the Gospel. This consideration I then endeavoured to oppose to all who either seek by some more comprehensive leading idea to supersede the Apostolic foundation, or whose speculations interfere in any

respect with its invariableness and perpetuity. But I would now extend these considerations somewhat further into the interior of Christian teaching ; since there also the application of the same truth must be of essential moment. If it be an infidelity and a contradiction to the Apostle, to assume the knowledge of a certain universal truth in which the whole value of his fact consists, and which may therefore to higher spirits at least, be propounded as its adequate substitute, it cannot be unseasonable to be on our guard against every mode in which that spirit of erroneous assumption may operate. That such modes do exist, and that they have power among us, will be I believe manifest, if we give attention to the subject before us.

All that in the Church of CHRIST has generally been considered as sound teaching, may be stated with confidence to have proceeded on this principle, that the works of God in general, and that great work in which we are most concerned, the work of redemption in particular, must be far beyond our powers of adequately comprehending ; that we cannot subject it to such analysis as will bring the structure of the whole, and the precise relation of its several parts, within the full grasp of human intelligence. Some purposes and relations are indeed revealed distinctly, together with the facts themselves ; some it is for experience conjoined with revelation to make discernible to the individual mind of the practical believer : he that hears with docility

will learn much, he that inquires with diligence and humility may learn more, of the connexion of Divine mysteries with practical Christianity: but it is inconsistent with any degree of that most necessary humility to suppose that the economy of salvation may be embraced in its whole system by our comprehension, or (what is the inseparable adjunct of such a supposition,) that we are in a condition to pronounce what is, or what is not essential to our reception of the vital influences of Christianity, among the facts or the doctrines connected with that stupendous mystery, the Incarnation of the Son of God. On this line of thought the true Church of CHRIST has never undertaken to philosophize, or to determine how each part of right faith tells upon right feeling and spiritual growth. Simply intent on maintaining integrity of faith, as well as the integrity of practice, and imparting according to the capacity of each recipient the knowledge of those doctrines which may well be presumed to be *all* necessary for the attainment of the full stature of CHRIST, her means for the actual attainment of this her final object, are widely different from those of intellectual analysis or generalization of the scheme of doctrine.

For here is a further step in this old approved scheme of Christian teaching. The spirit which receives simply as a fact the fundamental truth of the Incarnation of the Son of God for our redemption, receives necessarily in the same view the ordained means, through which the knowledge and

the perception of its benefits are extended to us. As the Divine Founder of the Church in his discourse with Nicodemus, propounded certain very mysterious truths expressly as earthly things through which we were to ascend to heavenly ones, to the doctrine of His descent from above, His subsistence there even when SON of Man, His elevation on the Cross for man's deliverance from death, His resumption of heavenly glory, even so is it of necessity in His mystical body. To the heavenly mysteries which the Church is ordained to teach of her LORD Incarnate, dead and risen, are ever conjoined these same earthly mysteries, or instruments of appliance with which she is divinely furnished, for imparting the virtue of heavenly things to all her members. It is from Apostles that the Church learnt to class "Baptisms and imposition of hands" with truths of divine and celestial import, among the very "principles of the doctrine of CHRIST:"* knowing well that since in the dispensation of the SPIRIT, nothing bears a merely formal or external character, her Sacraments are not therefore carnal, but spiritual. In the Baptism by which her sons are born anew of water and the SPIRIT into the family of God, because they are there planted into the death and resurrection of the ever living LORD, in the administration of that discipline of instruction and salutary ordinances, and that sacramental nutriment especially, by which the life thus begun is strengthened and matured, the

* Heb. vi. 1, 2; coll. John iii. 12, seq.

Church is but obeying her LORD's words, and applying and perpetuating the salvation of which HE is the Author and Finisher : and all for their sakes : whatever may be their proportion to the whole number of the called, in whom the character of God's elect children once received in Baptism, is preserved to the end, and the seeds of grace received in the good ground of obedient hearts, grow up to everlasting life. As the SPIRIT and His birth from above are compared to the material wind, to both alike are the words of the wise man applicable. " He that observeth the winds shall not sow : he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap : As thou knowest not the way of the SPIRIT ; nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child : so thou knowest not the works of God Who maketh all." The sacraments of our heavenly birth and growth were not given to us to analyse or dissect, or to ascertain the precise mode of their operation for our advancement in grace and virtue. They were given us to be used in the same manner, and in the like spirit as we use natural means for our corporeal sustenance ; whether we discern or not the manner in which they work, or the share that each may have in promoting our health and well-being.*

Such then is the system which we may now venture to designate as the Catholic one : being without question the rule on which the Church founded by the Apostles has proceeded from the first, in admi-

* Eccl. xi. 1—6.

nistering the truth and means of salvation : our own sacred offices, our Liturgy, our Catechism, bearing witness to its continued existence, and its continued recognition by ourselves. But it is evident that a very different view of things has grown up in these later times, and exercises great and powerful influence on our religious condition. And as this latter system proceeds altogether on a certain answer given to our original question, "What is the idea of Christianity?" an answer, the assumed certainty and simplicity of which is thought by very many to supersede, if not to condemn, the Catholic view of sacraments and channels of grace, our business is now to consider this answer more particularly, and examine it by the same rule of judgment which was applied to all the preceding ones. I have purposely reserved its consideration apart from that of the rationalistic answers before adduced : for the persons now in question, as we with thankfulness acknowledge, are believers in supernatural revelation and its unvaried authority : and the analogy of the spirit of their assumption with that of the other generalizers of religious truth, though apparent to many discerning minds, is usually (at least for the present, and in this country,) by them unperceived and unsuspected.

According to this view then, the essential form and idea of Christianity, without which it exists not, and in which it cannot fail to subsist, is the one doctrine, *consciously embraced*, of man's inability to

save himself, and his dependence for this altogether on what the Gospel of CHRIST has provided for him. In the definition of this provision, which should therefore appear peculiarly necessary here, the first inculcators of this view undoubtedly included the great Catholic truths concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation : but it is now more common to be content with such recognition of the Divinity of the SON and the SPIRIT, as suffices for the reception of the full satisfaction for human guilt by the one, and of renovation of heart by the other : these doctrines being at least so far received as the perusal of Holy Scripture, with prayer for Divine aid, has enabled the individual to read them there. For in any case, the one essential requisite, the one point on which all other salutary things depend, is stated to be this ; that the man convinced of his inability to supply the demands of the Divine law, reposes his whole trust and confidence in the righteousness of CHRIST the LORD. That happy moment being past when the soul seeing its own helplessness does thus cast itself upon the saving mercies of the SON of GOD, a principle of heavenly life thenceforward takes possession : and whereas before this, the works performed with a legal spirit, and in the hope of appeasing the demands of justice, only tended to increased condemnation,—now the soul, relieved altogether from the dread of wrath, is therefore capable of acceptable worship and free obedience,—an obedience dictated by pure gratitude for unmerited yet discriminating

mercy, and animated by the consciousness of having at length received the Spirit of adoption, and become through CHRIST a true child of God.

Now that there is a measure of truth mixed with this representation, partial and unsound in several respects as it may be shown to be, no orthodox Christian can doubt. If the point in which this system chooses to place the whole Christian idea, were not a truth in itself, and a truth moreover that is essentially involved in the foundations of Christianity, this system would not have any of the power which experience proves it to have possessed, of winning some earnest and well-disposed minds to its support. It is indeed a great truth that fallen man is utterly unequal to the task of his own recovery—that neither the merit nor the power by which he must work is of himself: it is a truth alike certified to us, whether we consider the astonishing means employed for our redemption by Him who is not wont to use means that are unnecessary; whether we ponder the images of lost sheep and others by which the Incarnate Deliverer Himself denoted those whom He came to seek and to save; or whether lastly we ask the testimony of experience, consulting not only the conscience of the sinner when first repenting, but the better intelligence awakened in the restored penitent. The highest saint, in proportion to his sanctity and obedience, discerns more keenly the sinfulness of his yet remaining frailty, and his defect from the grace afforded him: the greater

his labours in comparison with those of others, the more readily will he join with the Apostle in ascribing the glory entirely to the grace that prevented and that succours him,—the more sensibly will he feel the truth, that without CHRIST he can do nothing. It is therefore by no means the recognition of this truth,—it is not even any exaggeration or incorrectness in the mode of stating it,—that we blame in this idealization of Christianity ; it is rather that this one truth is placed in a position that belongs not to it, and dis severed from others in connexion with which alone it can be truly discerned, or bears any real meaning : that thus the Apostolic balance of truth being disturbed, and some doctrines so stated as to overbear or displace others no less sacred, the exclusive attention to a few favoured points conducts by the sure process of things to endangering the right reception of all. We have too sure indications before our eyes, that this danger is not unreal or imaginary. Meanwhile the divergency from Apostolic teaching here requires to be stated and proved in detail. And if it should appear that the provinces both of the Law and the Gospel with respect to the sinner, are very partially and untruly stated in this system ; that it neglects, and not only neglects but repudiates, the very means by which its peculiarly favoured truth is provided for and enforced by the Apostolic scheme of doctrine ; that it prescribes a particular order, which none but a very limited experience will confirm, for the method,

which has no such restriction, of the sinner's return to God ; and that other serious evils are involved in thus partially viewing and receiving the truth of the Gospel ; no more is needed for urging all men to seek their spiritual direction from a purer, an older, and a more enlarged theology than this.

For in the first place, is it true that the great use of the Law with respect to the people of God, is to alarm them out of its pale into that of the Gospel ; so that when once this is accomplished, and the hope there set before them has been once embraced, then to them the terrors of the law are addressed no longer, and the precepts are given only as a rule for the conduct of the present life ? And is it true that the Gospel properly so called, i. e., what constitutes the *Evangelion* or glad tidings to man, is simply our discharge from the forensic demands of the Law ; that obedience and good works are no part of the Gospel as such, but of the Law only ? Few, very few, are the passages of the Apostles' writings which, detached and taken by themselves, even appear to speak to this effect ; and these are amply vindicated from such untrue interpretation, by the statements and the arguments that accompany them. The didactic writings of the New Testament, those of S. Paul the most methodical in argument especially, give certainly another account of the relations of the Law and of the Gospel. While stating in the strongest terms that the former could not confer life ; that of its very holiness and goodness, it could not

justify the sinner but must condemn, confronting him with unfulfilled requisitions and unsatisfied penalties, which are only met by the atonement of JESUS CHRIST,—it states also wherein its chief point of inefficiency lies, and wherein on the contrary, consists the great and crowning efficacy of the Gospel. It is that while the former could only command, but never secure, the obedience which it prescribed,—the obedience which is his essential element of happiness for this life and for eternity : nay, while this holy law even aggravates the sin which it condemns, by superadding the more exceeding sinfulness of having discerned the excellency of God's precept, and yet under the thralldom of sin refusing compliance ; the latter, i. e., the coming of the SON of GOD in the flesh, which is itself the Gospel, does both require obedience, and enable the man to perform it. What the law could not do, being weak through the flesh, GOD, sending His own SON in the likeness of sinful flesh, has actually accomplished : namely, that not only in the sinless person of the Incarnate SON, but in us also, the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled, who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT. The grace of GOD which begins by justifying the ungodly,—whose first act with such is therefore the forgiveness of sins,—whose continued act with the imperfectly sanctified must be still and perpetually the forgiveness of sins,—is yet given from first to last, that the awakened will may comply with it—that in thus complying,

the man should obey the commandments of God with increasing diligence and alacrity, and *thus* work out his own salvation. This is not the mere consequent, it is the essential and characteristic operation of evangelic grace: the Gospel, when not *thus* operative, becomes from the savour of life unto life the savour of death unto death. And as the grace of our first reconciliation was the fruit of CHRIST's death, so is this grace of our obedience the fruit of His life, His new and heavenly life at God's right hand, dispensing all things by His Almighty intercession, and reigning in His Church and Body by His imparted SPIRIT. If this then be so, as the Gospels and Epistles throughout attest, how erroneous must it be, under the name of the Gospel, to understand not the whole of this process of grace, but the beginning only! How different from, or rather how repugnant to, the Apostolic teaching, to make the laying of the foundation afresh the object of our solicitude, as though this alone were required for our going on to perfection! And what is to be thought of the use, not now uncommon, of the very name of CHRIST in the same partial signification which had been attached to the name of His Gospel? when that all-holy title, emphatically denoting the Anointed King and Priest and Prophet, the bestower of the unction by which we know all things, the principle of new life and virtue in all the faithful, is used as a mere symbol of that one idea, thus nakedly presented, of a gratuitous reconciliation.

Further, secondly, if the idea of gratuitousness in the gift of heavenly life be indeed, as it is, a cardinal truth of Christianity, if it is not for works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy that God first visits us with His salvation, where is it that in the Church of God we should expect the exhibition of this particular truth? Where but in that laver of regeneration with which in that passage of S. Paul's Epistle to Titus it is thus markedly and indissolubly connected? Far more indeed, than by any theoretical statement whatever, does the Apostolical Church declare this doctrine in her Baptisms; sealing there to the absolute helplessness of infancy the grace which is no less gratuitous, no less preventive of all acceptable and properly Christian righteousness, to the most convinced and prepared adult. Even to Saul of Tarsus, who had been miraculously converted, and assured by CHRIST's own voice of his being a vessel of election to carry His name to the ends of the world, neither his immediate compliance, nor his penitent fast, nor any other of the marks of an excellent disposition within him were the seal of admission to the special family and household of God, but only the baptism for which CHRIST referred him to a human instrument. Even thus it was with other less distinguished converts of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles; the jailer of Philippi, the thousands pricked to the heart on the first Christian Pentecost, find not their regeneration to God's family in their

awakened earnestness, or their penitential sorrows, but in that baptism in which the Apostle directs them to wash away their sins,—their sins cleansed by Him alone in that Sacrament, who had shed out of His wounded side both water and blood for our redemption. This is assuredly the strongest attestation that facts could give to the doctrinal statement of the Epistles, that it is not of him who willeteth or runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy in the bestowal of Christian or evangelical grace to man: for this purpose were such instances employed of old by Augustine, and Prosper, and other vindicators of the supremacy of the grace of God against the Pelagian heretics who exalted against it the merit and power of man. Is it not, then, surprising, to find those who now profess an exclusive regard to the doctrine of free grace, not only neglecting this argument, but most zealously and unanimously repudiating it: joining with Pelagians of old, and Socinians of modern times, in contending that these several converts obtained nothing whatever in their baptism from God, which they had not equally possessed before; their acts and feelings before baptism evincing sufficiently that they were already regenerate, new born already into CHRIST's family, and that nothing more could be possibly needed than to certify the same by a suitable outward sign to the Church? When a merely subjective theory is thus made to countervail the direct testimony of Scrip-

ture respecting the spiritual character of holy baptism, and the regeneration and remission of sins there bestowed, and that too by the advocates of the freeness of divine grace and its independence of every degree of congruous merit in man ; assuredly there must be other influences beside that of attachment to this particular catholic truth, concerned in shaping a religion which so judges and determines. The disposition is here evident to ascribe to the excited feelings of the penitent all that religious importance which is so carefully denied to his works ; and with this high estimate of exalted feelings in religion, to view with somewhat of disgust that humble regard to sacraments and ordinances of grace which characterised the Catholic Christian of former days ; the strict carefulness of the walk then thought necessary to guard the awful grace and privilege of baptism ; the serious anticipation of future judgment and its terrors, as addressed by the LORD and His Apostles not to sinners without the pale, but to saints within it.* The disposition to put down sentiments thus agreeable to CHRIST'S Gospel under the misapplied name of legality or Judaism, is the necessary correlative of a system which represents as the very first entrance on the evangelic state that which is only the result and reward of continued unvarying obedience in it ; I mean the service of God from

* 2 Cor. v. 9, 10, 11, &c.

love wholly unmixed with fear, emancipated from all dread of losing His favour and falling into final perdition.

Here I would introduce a third observation on this peculiar theory of Christianity: viz., that it assigns one only line and order of thought, as admissible under its terms, for that return of the sinner to God—which has no such restriction in the actual Gospel, or in the large and varied experience of the Church. Little indeed do we find either in the Scripture period or those that followed, of conversions proceeding on this peculiar order, or which can, without very large demands on the imagination, be conceived as exemplifying its process. We hear indeed abundantly of vicious men reclaimed,—of men immersed in idolatrous ignorance enlightened and converted,—by the preaching of Christian doctrine: but here it is the Advent of the Lord to judgment which is the usual great awakener in the former case; and it is the inculcation of the truths of natural religion which commonly takes precedence in the latter, heathen sages being habitually cited as good witnesses to that primary truth both by the Apostles of CHRIST and their successors. We also hear, and that very frequently, of men of more correct lives and more disciplined thoughts brought from Gentilism to embrace earnestly the Christian faith; and what then is the process we read in their case? It is almost invariably of this kind: that having been

unable to find any definite rule of life or satisfaction to their best moral perceptions in the schools of heathen philosophy which they have consulted for that end, they have been struck and captivated on approaching the school of CHRIST, with the great superiority of His law in every respect where the two could come into comparison ; and in essaying to reduce to practice the *precepts* they understood, they were led to faith in the *mysteries* which before they knew not. Of persons thus converted, some have been glorious martyrs of JESUS CHRIST : in the war that offended Paganism waged against the invading truth,—gladly perilling their lives to the death for Him who redeemed them at the infinite price of His own. And in a process thus different from what the recent theory prescribes, if not in some respects inconsistent with it, what sound Christian will question but that the full virtue of CHRIST's holy Gospel was received by such converts—that every true doctrine, that of atoning and preventing grace included, had according to the measure of the recipient, its full, complete, and *saving* efficiency ? And if so, the simplest may judge how wrong is the place now very often assigned to obedience in the concerns of human salvation : how meagre and how very untrue is that rule of judgment which classes together as things of the same kind—that endeavour to please God in deed and truth, which, even in its imperfect stages, leads to faith—and the false righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees.

But to pass from the commencement of the Christian life to its continuance, and confining ourselves to the examples of Holy Scripture on this point, what is the spirit and the conduct which in the Epistle read on this Sunday, S. Paul enjoins on the converts of Corinth, and of which he proposes himself to them as an example ?* It is the spirit to judge nothing before the time—to refrain, in one sense, even from the task of judging ourselves—in the midst of assiduous faithfulness to the stewardship imposed upon us, whether of natural or spiritual things, to reserve the judgment till the day of CHRIST'S second coming, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and when every man shall have praise according to his work. The applicability of such precepts is evident on the Catholic system of teaching, where the true Christian is distinguished from the false by his retention of the grace of his baptism, and exemplification of it in charity and good works ; working out with fear and trembling the work which he has divine power lodged within him to accomplish—and never counting himself to have attained while he yet dwells in imperfection. But the application is unintelligible to a system in which the point of solicitude is not whether the way of life is persevered in, but whether it has ever been entered : and in which the test of this, the test that distinguishes the true and the untrue Christian within the visible Church, is the supposed

* 1 Cor. iv. 1—5.

explicit acceptance by the former, independent of the first seal of Christianity, of an offer which presents salvation unconditionally. And if it be so hard or impossible to find marks of this peculiar unconditional confidence in the primitive Christians, walking as they did in the filial spirit of sons with their FATHER in Heaven ; should it not appear more difficult, more obviously impossible to trace them in the Jew, serving God under the comparative bondage of the older dispensation ? Yet to these also it is necessary they should be ascribed if the metaphysical propriety of the system is to hold : there must be here not only the possession of gratuitous salvation from the Almighty, but the conscious acceptance of it as gratuitous, to serve as the ideal note or mark of distinction between the genuine and the spurious Israelites. And hence from the stated offerings of slain beasts under the old dispensation, the good Israelites are represented to have consciously derived a grace which those sacrifices could never supply even instrumentally, the grace of remission of spiritual guilt : in other words, it is presumed that these sacrifices did not only, as they most certainly did, prefigure the One great Sacrifice of CHRIST our LORD, with the better blessings for which the heir of salvation was then trained, but that they also *exhibited* that sacrifice as open types to ancient Israel ; and not only so, but exhibited it sacramentally, in its grace of full expiation and remission, to the truly faithful among them.

But to assert this is not barely to go far beyond the Epistle to the Hebrews—it is to contradict it—it is to run counter to its repeated asseverations that the Levitical Sacrifices conveyed nothing but outward ritual purifications to any: it is to ascribe to the ancient people a grace which (according to the Holy Scriptures) belongs only to us: it is to make actual Christians of them who without us could not be made perfect: and to whom the application of divine forgiveness was through the Promise to the fathers which was to them the Gospel in germ, as S. Paul distinctly teaches us; and not in any degree through the Law, its rites or its sacrifices. And this I mention here because it is this most unfounded presumption, the supposed sacramental presence of CHRIST in the typical offerings to the then worshippers, that alone causes men to infer from the abolition of these sacrifices by the Gospel, the condemnation likewise of all commemorative Sacrifice in the new economy. For that unfounded position once removed, no such argument can possibly be raised from the Divine Epistle to the Hebrews. That One Sacrifice for sin which can never be repeated, and whose virtue is heavenly and eternal,—may be, and is commemorated by CHRIST'S ordinance on the Christian Altar—the representation of that Altar above on which the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec presents for ever His Sacrifice to the Eternal FATHER.

In no instance indeed is the opposition of the

new system to that of the Primitive Church more vehement than on this matter of the Eucharistic Sacrifice: that service, that proper *λειτουργία* of Christians, by which to us as to the Galatians, CHRIST is evidently set forth crucified among us, in all the divine virtue of that proper immolation; not as repeating His one oblation of Himself once offered (God forbid the thought,)—but as perpetually exhibiting and applying it to the ever recurring wants of His people. A representation in which all the most ancient liturgies are so singularly concurrent, (as they are also in all the great essentials of the commemorative sacrifice, however diverging in other respects in the several quarters of Christendom,)—cannot surely but exhibit the true living idea of the great Christian worship, as the Apostles, who saw and heard the LORD, actually delivered it to the Church. Their words, in which we see harmoniously combined those several aspects of the same great object, in which modern systematism sees only elements of contradiction, do thus but the more truly set forth to us that LORD of life, the unity of whose mystical body S. Paul saw in the one Bread of which communicants partook—their joint blessing from His Blood in the unity of the Cup of which they drank.* Melancholy indeed is the descent from their sublime and reverential and affecting language to the lower statements of these awful and blessed mysteries which are now so com-

* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

monly substituted. But most melancholy is it to reflect that to many thus prepossessed the higher representations of the ancient Liturgies suggest only the idea of corruption or idolatrous abomination.

Still, uncatholic and anti-ecclesiastical as are the inevitable issues of this mode of idealizing the Gospel, great especially as is its hostility to the notion of sacramental grace and an apostolically descended commission of ministry, yet do we assert that all Catholic Christian ideas are wanting to them? By no means; for some of these are inseparable from any portion of true Christianity; by God's great mercy Christianity is possessed by thousands who profess this system to a degree far greater than this system itself is capable of imparting it. That intense desire of restored unity which is inseparable from Catholic Christianity may be witnessed even in that strange attempt at combination of which we have lately heard so much: and absurd as the attempt must be to effect an Evangelic Alliance of all correct-minded Christians, when every Christian of high ecclesiastical views is of necessity excluded from the comprehension,—yet the motive that dictated the attempt of uniting what could be united, is one that deserves respect and sympathy from us. Were we merely desirous of a triumph and confutation of their false principles, nothing can be more complete than that which is afforded by the total failure of this attempt: the impossibility so clearly evinced of eliciting from this

new description of Œcumenical Council any sounds but discordant ones, or of obtaining from their undefined agreements to differ, any scheme or programme of approximation which would not multiply and aggravate the confusion. Such, notwithstanding all attempts at concealment, appear most manifestly here ; but feelings far different from those of triumph or satisfaction are called forth in truly Catholic minds on such occasions. It is the deep commiseration of brotherly charity for men seeking a good object, while instructed to despise or to hate the means in which alone it is to be found ; who while they think Apostolic descent a nullity, and denominational differences, as they term them, allowable on the principles of CHRIST'S Gospel, yet think concurrent action and united devotion attainable ; and who when, through the sins of ourselves and our fathers, the portions of those lie separate who inherit CHRIST'S commission to administer the one Sacrament of Communion, refuse and disdain to unite with any one of them.

But to conclude. If principles such as those I considered last Sunday are put out of the question, our choice, the individual choice of every one of us, lies between the view of which that Evangelic Alliance is the consistent exemplification, and that of the primitive Apostolic Church, to which our Church has distinctly declared her adherence. There are doubtless intermediate ways of happy inconsistency, when ecclesiastical obligations are regarded

with enough of respect to prevent joining schemes like these, and yet the true grounds of ecclesiastical obligation are unrecognized, which can alone give them a right to direct or control our search for Catholic union in CHRIST. The choice of reasoning men lies between the two systems I have mentioned. And if, which I will not at present undertake to dispute, our most striking danger is from the encroachments and usurpations of Rome, we have to choose whether in opposing them we shall proceed on this generalized Protestantism without symbol and definable union, or on that firm standing-ground which all our truly great Divines have marked out, of adherence to the principles of the Ancient Church.

Let us not consider it a slight matter which is thus proposed for our choice: and let us particularly not think it a point of small moment even for our spiritual condition, being intelligent men and scholars, whether we are among those who reverence or among those who vilify the Church of Apostolical times: for to these, and to no later ones, are those ideas and practices clearly traced, which are now marked for abhorrence and rejection. And I would prefer finally expressing this in the words, only recently discovered, of a great Prelate of our Church, one whom it has not yet become usual in this University which he adorned, to consider as a favourer of Roman views and practices. Speaking in a learned language to the Clergy, of certain interpretations of prophecy then put forth, and now again proposed

with greater pertinacity than ever, he says in conclusion,—“This I say, that we should not think so ill of the promise of JESUS CHRIST, so ill of the men of Apostolic times, without whom we should not have the benefit even of the Holy Scriptures, and of all the other heroes of the primitive Church—as to preach a general apostacy of the Church, so disgraceful, so idolatrous : which, if it be true, infected and defiled all the assemblies of Christians, not only from the dissolution of the Roman empire, but from the very infancy of the Church. For if we cut off all intercession of angels and saints for us living on earth, and striving with the host of evil spirits,—if we acknowledge no power at all before the throne of God, of the martyrs who poured forth their lives for CHRIST,—if all those who venerated their remains are by us rejected, scouted, and branded as idolaters,— what that Church may be with which we can hold communion I am altogether ignorant. I know indeed what, among the men of these degenerate times, is the face of the churches, and what a spirit is stirred in all, when the seamless coat of CHRIST has been rent asunder. But when we have discussed and ventilated all points, to those times we must have recourse, to those, I say, which knew the Apostles and the disciples of Apostles, which not only professed the Christian religion, but extended it both by purity of life, and by the shedding of blood. If that religion which sent the best part of the world under the yoke of CHRIST,

was itself apostatical and idolatrous, where shall that appear which is Christian, Catholic, and Apostolical ? ”

So far Bishop Pearson (whose words,* though primarily directed against the censors of the Church's veneration for departed Saints, are no less conclusive against those who decry her Eucharistic Sacrifice.) May we, like him, have our fellowship with those to whom the Apostles communicated what they had heard and seen, well assured that this is the true fellowship with the FATHER and with His SON JESUS CHRIST.

* Concio IV. ad Clerum. Minor Theological Works, Ed. Churton, vol. ii. pp. 54, 55.

SERMON III.

CHRISTIAN FAITH IN ITS OBJECTIVE CHARACTER,
AND SUBJECTIVE OPERATION, ILLUSTRATED
FROM THE EXAMPLE OF S. THOMAS.

(Preached on the Eve of S. Thomas, 1846.)

I S. JOHN XX. 27, 28, 29.

THEN SAITH HE TO THOMAS, REACH HITHER THY FINGER
AND BEHOLD MY HANDS: AND REACH HITHER THY HAND
AND THRUST IT INTO MY SIDE: AND BE NOT FAITHLESS
BUT BELIEVING. AND THOMAS ANSWERED, AND SAID
UNTO HIM, MY LORD AND MY GOD. JESUS SAITH
UNTO HIM, THOMAS, BECAUSE THOU HAST SEEN ME,
THOU HAST BELIEVED. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE
NOT SEEN AND YET HAVE BELIEVED.

FROM the general Epistle of the great Apostle and
Evangelist to whom we owe this remarkable history,
I have endeavoured in my two preceding discourses
to illustrate the objective character of the faith he
preached to the world: that it was what he and the
other Apostles had seen and heard and handled that
they were commissioned to declare to the whole

Church, in order that the Church might have fellowship with them, and thus with the FATHER and with the SON. It is the real Incarnation of the Eternal Word,—the actual coming in the flesh of the SON of GOD, born, dead, and risen for our salvation,—that is the sole basis of our religion : and this, through the divinely appointed means by which its belief and salutary influence is propagated, becomes the principle of Christian faith and righteousness. This great fact, and not any particular proposition concerning it, however true or useful in its place, which men may consider as containing the whole idea, or all that is essential to its purpose ; this great fact, I say, in the totality of its objective character and in the consequent totality of its applicable virtue and influence ; this is the real *Articulus stantis aut cadentis Ecclesiæ*. Thus has the Catholic and Apostolic Church ever thought ; and I have endeavoured, as far as I was able, to vindicate its judgment here against a systematizing spirit of comparatively recent growth which reasons and determines very differently.*

It were a very suitable corollary to this argument, to illustrate by examples this objective faith as it existed in its earliest witnesses ; and to show how their faith in its principle and in its effects stands related to the faith of others more remote in time from the great Object, and believing though they had not seen. And for this, we have the opportune

* Note A.

occurrence, close to this last Sunday in Advent, of the commemoration of the Apostle S. Thomas. This being the peculiar instruction which the Church deduces from the example of that Apostle, on the eve of whose festival we are already entered, may well engage our present consideration.

The Church, which is built on the foundation of the Apostles, and has ever hallowed the anniversaries of their departure, as their natal days of immortality, —as she derived her doctrine from their express teaching, derives also guidance and encouragement from their example. And no inconsiderable part of the instruction thus obtained arises from the contrast of their immoveable faith and constancy to death, when divine power had fully armed them for the work of the Gospel,—with their irresoluteness and their manifold imperfections before. No otherwise could we so effectually learn that truth which one born into their number out of due time has taught us ; that the divine treasure was held by them in earthly vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of them ; that we might unhesitatingly refer the whole praise of their successful labour to that Spirit of CHRIST, by whom the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified. And this lesson is most powerfully suggested to us by the example of that one of the twelve, who, by divine permission, and for more confirmation of the faith, as our Collect expresses it, was suffered to be a week behind his Apostolic brethren ; to be so long doubtful in

that great article of the Christian belief which gives proof and demonstration to all the rest. His conviction and pregnant confession, with the address of the risen LORD to him, are fraught with weighty instruction and consolation to every age of the Church.

To derive instruction from this remarkable doubt, we must begin by the consideration of the mind that entertained it. Thomas, called Didymus, was one of the twelve specially chosen by the Omniscient LORD, as His heralds and witnesses to the world; of which number, as he significantly intimated, one only was a traitor: and from the few but very expressive indications that the Gospels supply before this conjuncture, we have sufficient materials to enable us to conceive his character. He appears to have been a man of earnest mind, capable of strong and disinterested attachments; but of that temperament which looks habitually to the darker side of things; which out of several future events equally possible, is ever disposed to conceive the least welcome as the most probable, and to distrust extraordinary good news all the more from the circumstance of its being good. This habit of mind we find very strongly exemplified on the occasion when our LORD, announcing His friend Lazarus's death, declares to the twelve His purpose of going to Jerusalem. They all with one accord deprecated His self-exposure to the powerful enemies in the capital who had

so lately threatened Him with stoning: and doubtless those of the number who shared in any degree the sanguine temper of their chief member—his willing disbelief of the possibility of the LORD's subjection to shame and death,—must have remonstrated in the hope either that their dissuasions would be effectual, or that their LORD, if He chose to brave the danger, would by His experienced power surmount it. But not so thinks Thomas. He is the first to recognize the adverse determination of his Master, and while perceiving, despairingly to acquiesce in it: and he says immediately to his fellow disciples: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him:" thus uniting with a feeling of entire self-devotion, the anticipation that the worst must follow, that in the death of their beloved Master all hope was gone; and it was well for them who had contentedly shared His fortunes hitherto, to perish also contentedly with Him by the hands of His triumphant enemies. This speech so singularly though unconsciously prophetic of his future association with his LORD by endurance to death in His cause, is not the only indication we possess of this character of S. Thomas's mind. We see somewhat of the same tone in the question he propounds on the eve of the LORD's Passion. When they are all reminded by Him of the place whither He is going, and the way thither, Thomas asks, "LORD, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" And amidst the sad anticipations of approaching separa-

tion which that moving series of discourses must have suggested prominently to a mind like his, it is not wonderful that even the animating answer he received was but dimly understood and faintly regarded; the answer that CHRIST was Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that whether in life or in death, the way of immortality and blessedness lay in following Him.*

When therefore the hour of darkness came, realizing apparently in its worst form the melancholy anticipation of Thomas; and when a despair of the redemption of Israel through JESUS of Nazareth fell not on him only but on them all, can we wonder that this Apostle was the last to receive the new hope awakened by the unexpected news of the LORD'S Resurrection from the grave? Unexpected it ought not to have been: the LORD'S prediction to that effect, the knowledge of which had reached as we find even the counsels of the enemies, ought never to have been absent from the faithful recollection of his chosen ones; yet so it was. The reports of the holy women who found the body gone and heard the Angel's assurance that the LORD yet lived, were regarded by them all as idle tales, and they believed them not. But this culpable incredulity and dulness of heart for which our LORD upbraided them all, (as we are told by S. Mark,) proceeded in Thomas one step further. By accident, as we may well conceive, though not without a divine provi-

* S. John xi. 16, xiv. 5.

dence overruling the accident, he was not with the rest when JESUS on the evening of the Easter Sunday appeared in the midst of them as they sat with closed doors, and by the salutation, "Peace be to you," dispelled from all their company the incredulity, which he had already removed by the same ocular demonstration from S. Peter. And when Thomas is assured by the rest that they had seen the LORD, he refuses to admit even this as proof of the Resurrection, unless the fact of its being a real and not a phantastic body were made evident to the sense that could alone determine that question. Let us not exaggerate the feeling, blameworthy as it is, which dictated this determined refusal. There is not the least reason for thinking that Thomas suspected his companions either of fraud or of a deluded vision: but, without better proof than their assurances or arguments could afford to his questioning spirit, he could not believe but that this was a mere spectral apparition, such as common belief and tradition affirmed as not unusual with the ghosts of the departed; and that his LORD might be yet in Hades, His body still lifeless, either in the grave where He was laid or elsewhere. And his gracious LORD, who saw in this too wilful oblivion of His own promised resurrection, only an extension of the same unbelief that had existed and had been forgiven in the other Apostles,—an extension proceeding less from any greater moral evil in him, than from a peculiarity in

mental constitution,—does not refuse to S. Thomas that proof which He had in mere mercy afforded to them, the sensible proof that He was risen. On the Sunday following that of the Resurrection, (for such honour did He to that holy day, which was to be the standing LORD'S Day of the Christian Church, as to mark it by this very expressive token, a weekly recurring festival of His rising again,) on this Sunday after Easter, He appears to Thomas, as well as to the other ten, and not content with the proof of sight which He renews to them, He invites the doubting disciple specially to prove by touch that it was no mere spectre or phantom of a body, but the same body that was pierced with the nails and spear, now revived and incorruptible. Thus commanded, the Apostle might even more reverently make the experiment and obtain the palpable proof he had desired, than acquiesce without such proof in the certainty of his LORD'S word that so it was. But however produced or confirmed, we know that his conviction was complete ; and that it embraced not the bare fact of a man risen from the dead, but the saving truth of the Christian creed, the resurrection of the Incarnate LORD ; that with the humanity it embraced also the inherent divinity concerned in this fact ; the divinity and humanity of Him who had power to lay down His life, and had power to take it again, —who was one with the FATHER that raised Him from the tomb, one with the SPIRIT that quickened His human remains to new life. This confession, the

foundation of the Christian's hope for time and for eternity, is expressed by the convinced Apostle in the exclamation, "My LORD and my God."

From a doubt thus resolved and exchanged for an unhesitating and adoring confession, the Church of God cannot but derive signal instruction, both as it respects the object to which her faith is directed, and the nature and moral quality of the faith itself which she is called to exercise.

And first for the objective consideration. We cannot question the intrinsic importance of a truth to which our risen LORD Himself attached such weight in His first display of Himself to the other Apostles; when to them astonished and affrighted as S. Luke relates, and thinking they saw a spirit, He remarks, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." The sight it appears was sufficient for their conviction, without the test of positive handling, which was also offered to them: the sight, accompanied with a voice which had never deceived, sufficed to convince them that it was no spectral form, but a palpable body, that thus claimed their recognition; though their mere report was not enough to awaken conviction of this in their more sceptical brother. But whether acknowledged, as by S. Thomas, on the evidence of touch; or on the suggestion of sight, as by them and S. Mary Magdalene, to whom the mysterious words were spoken, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My FATHER"; or whether received, as it is more

blessed to receive it, without sight, on the evidence of the SPIRIT and its early witnesses,—still the fact remains the same to which the faithful confession of every Christian is demanded. The Resurrection of the LORD as the first fruits of them that slept was that of a palpable corporeal substance : the restitution, in the selfsame organization, but regenerated and perfected, of that which being sown in dishonour is raised in glory—the fit tenement of the never-dying spirit. That article of our Creed, the Resurrection of the flesh, was indeed to Gentile conception incredible. At Athens, when S. Paul preached, it was this article and that of CHRIST'S Resurrection urged in proof of it, that was the first to excite the contemptuous opposition of Stoics and Epicureans alike ; as well of those who had admitted, as of those who would have denied, his discourse on the immortality of the soul. But however it might be with heathens, perplexed with conflicting testimonies of their philosophical schools respecting matter as the source of imperfection, and unable to conceive of a reformed or glorified body, it was otherwise with the possessors of express revelation. With them the doctrine of the resurrection of the body always went hand in hand with that of the soul's immortality. To receive the one doctrine, as did the Pharisees, was equally to receive the other ; while to deny the resurrection, as did the Sadducees, went equally, as S. Luke declares, to the denial of angel and spirit ;

and therefore no less certainly to that of the immaterial and immortal principle in man. With us both doctrines are secured in that which embodies their whole truth to the faithful, our LORD's re-animation of the same body that lay in the tomb, by the soul that had descended to Hades—the truth which directly apprehended turns the darkness of the prospect as it appeared even to all the ancient faithful—to David and Hezekiah for instance,—to a hope and a joy of which their implicit faith was but the germ. The sure belief with which we now commit to the earth the bodies of the faithful departed is sustained in the mind of the Christian, by the assured verity of His risen body, whose resurrection is both the cause, and the type, and the earnest of ours. Hence the care with which the Church in the earliest ages defined this truth of the reality of our LORD's human body, both before and after the resurrection, against the false science of those heretics who would unite Christianity with Pagan sentiments on this head. And to produce conviction on this essential article of faith, at a period when the danger had begun of Gentile converts being led to question it, (as it had at the later time of S. John's writing,) nothing could be more appropriate than the fact which only his fourth Gospel brings to light, viz: the conviction of one even of the Apostolical College, whose doubt turned on this very point. Nor would the example be a whit the less convincing to all men from the circumstance, that the doubt in the

Apostle's own case was not dictated by the subtleties of Greek or Oriental philosophy, but was the hesitation of a simpler mind as to the mere matter of fact, *i. e.* whether this were not rather a spectral appearance of his LORD, than His actually restored and glorified humanity.

But to turn from the fact we are to believe to the subjective consideration of the believer, which is the most distinctive and appropriate use of S. Thomas's example; the first instruction which his case appears to suggest is this: that minds of every natural complexion are called to the exercise of Christian faith. The principle of faith—the disposition to receive the Word of God as such, to embrace and to walk by it—is not indeed the gift of nature but of grace: but its operation in each individual mind is modified by that mind's peculiar cast or temperament: and to every class of mind there are sufficient motives presented for the willing admission of the truth whereby we are sanctified and saved. And this remark is the more necessary, because by those who are destitute of this principle of faith, by those especially who have lost sight of it when it was once theirs, as by the children of this world universally, its nature is wholly misapprehended: it is regarded as the mere result of humour or temperament. The mode of thought and action which religion requires, the walking by faith in preference to sight, and counting it even more praiseworthy to hope against hope, to venture faith on the divine word, when human appearances

are most against it,—all this appears to irreligious men to require in the first instance a credulous unreasoning disposition: it is thought to involve a singular capacity for believing (not according to the evidence that compels assent with reasonable men, but) according to the mind's own arbitrary wishes and determinations: and they conceive minds otherwise constituted, which are unable thus to subject the understanding to the will, to be naturally incapable of religious thought and action. Now this might be refuted sufficiently by pointing to persons of every mental constitution who have heartily embraced the faith of CHRIST, who have even lived and died in attestation of it. As a disposition to credulous acceptance of whatever is told may be found apart from Christian faith, often even in opposition to it; so, on the other hand, have minds inclined to the opposite and equally irrational extreme of distrusting ordinary testimony too much, been found able to embrace and act on the infallible truth of the Gospel. And to come nearer to our present subject,—the disposition which characterizes so large a portion of mankind, of believing more readily what they wish to be true, is not the necessary prerequisite for Christian faith, nor always found in conjunction with it: the other scarcely less common habit of mind, and which seems certainly more common in our nation,—that habit of mind which requires stronger evidence to convince it of what it most desires,—may be and often is found to receive Chris-

tian truth. And if such is the testimony of experience,—then among the Apostles, the first believers and disseminators of Christian religion, we might expect to find our first examples and illustrations.

May we not, therefore, view in this light the conduct and example of S. Thomas? When the announcement of the LORD's approaching suffering, and death, and rising again, draws from Simon Peter the exclamation, "Be it far from Thee, LORD: this shall not happen to Thee,"—and when again the apprehension of the same death as probable, causes Thomas to say of his own accord to the rest, "Let us go with Him, that we may die with Him,"—we see love and devotion in both: but while this, existing in a sanguine temperament, leads the former actually to disbelieve the coming Passion, and in so doing to incur the most severe rebuke of his LORD; the same, in a melancholy temperament, leads to a forward acquiescence in that truth; though the Resurrection, which the former would more readily admit, was more slowly received by the latter. Here we seem to see the two extremes equally balanced, as it were, with regard to Christian faith: the fact being in this as in other circumstances of natural as well as accidental difference, that each temperament has its advantages, each its difficulties and proper temptations: but each, with the discipline which its peculiar need requires, may be prepared for that salvation which only through faith is attained by

any : nor can we pronounce of one more than of the other, that it incapacitates any man for that attainment. When the impetuosity and inconstancy that belonged to the natural disposition of Peter was chastened by the severe trial that gave him experience of his weakness,—which at the cost of bitter tears produced distrust of himself, and a purer confidence in his God and Saviour,—and when a discipline of another kind was employed to correct the desponding doubts and the speculative difficulties of Thomas, — when both had the strongest external proofs before them of Divine love and power, commanding them to be not faithless but believing,—and both in the subsequent Pentecost received that gift of the SPIRIT which revealed the whole faith of CHRIST, in its harmony with their moral and spiritual being and with the concerns of the world around,—then were both, though retaining each his proper constitutional temperament, alike faithful servants of their common Master. We cannot doubt the exemplary fidelity and earnest self-devotion of one who bore the name of his LORD to remote regions of Asia, and sealed his testimony with a glorious martyrdom : nor can we but feel a singular interest in that Apostle to whom ecclesiastical tradition assigns the first implantation of the Christian faith in India : a country in which the Church, planted by him and subsequent Apostolical labourers, has never ceased to exist after a manner ; while yet in the great body of its inhabitants the dominion

of its ancient idolatry remains unshaken, even to the time when Divine Providence has brought it under British rule. Happy for our Church and nation if our manifold sins, our multiplied schisms and divisions especially, make us not unworthy of being the instruments of that which Providence has thus put in our hands ; if it be indeed reserved for us to accomplish in that region, the work which Apostolical men once began !

But the great lesson of this example, that which raises it above all merely local or personal considerations, and gives to all in every age an intimate concern in this doubt and its removal, lies in the Divine address that follows: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The privilege of those who had heard, who had seen with their eyes, who had looked upon, and whose hands had handled, of the Word of life,—that Eternal Life which was from the beginning with the FATHER, and was manifest unto us,—the privilege thus described by that one among the disciples to whom it was most largely imparted,—was most undoubtedly a great and a blessed one : but it was not, as that Incarnate Word here implies, to be the common inheritance of the faithful. And the sensible proof of the identity of His glorified body which was properly vouchsafed to them, His selected witnesses, could not be accorded to all : neither could it without sinful unbelief, be required by any, under that dispensation of the SPIRIT

which was soon to be established ; offering proofs to the earliest age of an overpowering and miraculous nature,—but such as were apprehensible also, though less immediately, by all ages that succeeded. And yet the condition of those placed under the remotest proof, was not to be esteemed an unblest one : it must not be thought less blessed than that of S. John, or S. Peter, or S. Thomas, or the rest : nay, it had a blessedness of its own, as the LORD's words plainly intimate, of which those privileged persons were destitute : it had a blessedness arising from the circumstance that it was pure faith without the evidence of sense. On this account, even they who had known CHRIST after the flesh, were now, as S. Paul declares, to know Him after this manner no more : He was soon to withdraw Himself from all mortal eyes, even to the highest heaven, that thus ascended and glorified He might send His Spirit upon all flesh, and make the heavenly blessedness of believing without sight, the heritage of all His Church.

Never can we sufficiently estimate the value of this assurance to distant ages of the Church ; when the more striking manifestations of truth that were the portion of the earlier times, exist no longer ; when the credentials of religion to the great mass of mankind lie mainly in the monuments it has left behind, and the moral impressions connected with them. Here men are no more tested by the fiery trial of persecution, urging them to forsake their

LORD, as was the case when the proofs of Divine presence in the Church were more conspicuous : a different, and to some dispositions a far more severe, trial is afforded by the speculative difficulties which arise in the absence of such plain tokens ; the temptation thence presented to insincere or fluctuating minds, to abandon all practical regard to the unseen objects of faith, and to live the life of sense and of the world. Such is, indeed, the ever-existing tendency both of individuals and communities, if left to themselves. It is the question, not of Epicurean mockery only, but of indolent carnal worldliness at every time : “ Where is the promise of His coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” This view of the routine of the world as the only reality, which excludes all believing regard both to the past and the future of religion, would proceed universally from contemptuous indifference to open enmity and apostasy, were it not for the leaven which works in the evil mass of the world, causing even the irreligious to feel, and to be in a manner affected by, its influence. There is a salt of the earth which preserves the mass from corruption : there are, in other words, higher and better principles at work, animating invisibly those institutions of CHRIST, in which irreligion or captious uncharitableness sees but lifeless formality, and preserving them from the deadening effect of carnal or hypocritical abuse : these principles, ever actuating

the living members of CHRIST's body, in whom the grace of His Baptism abides effectually, prevent the noxious maxims of worldly unbelief from taking full effect, and still maintain a healthy fabric of Christian society in the world. To give circulation and activity to these principles—to work, each in his sphere of duty, those mighty energies by which CHRIST's kingdom is preserved and will be sustained till all things are made subject to Him,—while it is in a certain measure the calling of every member of the Church,—is their calling especially, their peculiar province and business, who are the officers of that Church of CHRIST, the ministers and stewards of His mysteries. To them it belongs to hold forth to others, to the faithful and also to the unbelieving—whether they will hear or forbear—a LORD still present, though unseen, whose words yet unfulfilled will be as surely verified in their time as were His Birth, His Death, and Resurrection long since. Thus are they, as our Collects of the season imply, to link together in one chain the two Advents of our LORD and God ; and as His first coming was prepared by a preaching of repentance, so are they now by the exhibition of His saving doctrine and Sacraments, to keep alive the faith and obedience of His kingdom, and make ready a people prepared for His second awful appearing.

But for these things who is sufficient ? Assuredly they only to whom the objects of faith are habitually present ; to whom the belief of things unseen is not

the mere repetition of a formula, or the compliance with conventional decencies, but a cherished and a growing conviction, strengthened, not impaired or overborne, by observation and intercourse with secular life, as well as by the direct spiritual means of its maintenance, the means of meditation and prayer and holy communion ; the mind adjusting to this belief not only whatever of a directly religious nature comes before it, but all the experience of life, and its estimate both of the past and the future. Vain were it, humanly speaking, to hope for this, without which the spiritual functions can scarcely be exercised effectually for the salvation of mankind, unless in these seminaries of sound learning and religious education, in which both these and the higher orders of the Christian laity receive their culture, there be that habitual tone of reference to the unseen, that recognized subordination of what is visible and temporal to that which is spiritual and eternal. If only in believing the LORD's word we can hope for the single eye which will make the whole body full of light, according to His remarkable image, it is for those especially to remember this who are charged with the instruction of others ; to remember also the caution annexed,—a caution most awfully emphatic to those who are set as lights to the world,—Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness. We have heard what He said of the salt which has lost his savour: when that which should season the corrupt mass, itself needs a

seasoning which there is nothing left to impart to it,—when that soul which should bear in itself the vivid influences of truth, and make them act powerfully on the world, is itself without sense or perception of them,—what is left but a fate more dreadful, more ignominious by far than that of the ordinary faithless Christian ?

There is much indeed which, to speculative and studious minds, enhances the difficulty felt by all men of receiving the declaration of our LORD now before us. Much especially is there in the contrast between the Church in our times and that to which the LORD Himself once spoke, or that in which the vestiges of His presence were more recent or more clearly legible, that might tempt even the honest servant of CHRIST to covet their position for his own, and to inquire impatiently how his may be made like theirs. In minds over-subtle or over-sensitive, or which expect more assurance on this head than either God's word or the experience of His Church will warrant, very serious practical error may be the consequence of this process of thought, such as may greatly aggravate the existing sources of perplexity to the many. For all difficulties, however, our remedy must be sought in Him who confirmed and blessed His once doubting disciple : in looking beyond the fluctuations of human imagination or opinion, to that truth which He once fixed immoveably on the earth : and guarding against those vices of the inner man, which would

mould our conception of the invariable and eternal by our own wishes, or feelings, or fancies. The anomalies that encompass our position may be great : our desire that they were rectified may be ardent and even painful : but vain is any step taken for their removal which proceeds not on penitent amendment in ourselves of the sins that have caused these anomalies, whether our own sins or our predecessors' : vain above all is the thought of rectifying them by losing sight of the immutability of truth, or sacrificing any portion of that truth to the supposed demands of another. That truth, however admitting, as controversies arose, of increased definition in detail, will as little brook addition as diminution or alteration : to substitute for it either another message, or an imperfect, or an interpolated one, is to incur a most awful Apostolic censure. In it whatever is needful to the soul's health was as surely held from the very beginning of the Gospel explicitly, as it must have been held implicitly by the faithful in the preceding dispensations before CHRIST'S coming ; in it all that we are required to hold as the condition of salvation must be as old as the Apostolic age ; and whatever, professing to bear that description, is new, must be therefore false. For the unchangeableness of Him who is the Alpha and Omega is concerned in the assertion that the dispensation which He fixed is a final one ; that it is not, like the Patriarchal or the Mosaic economies, the germ of something yet to be unfolded, but pro-

perly termed the “consummation of the ages preceding,”—itself “the end of the world.”

With that light, therefore, which we obtain from the records of CHRIST’s revelation, and the assured stability of His Church and truth in the world, may we now appropriate the words spoken to this one of His chosen witnesses. Blessed, without question, were the eyes that beheld the things which they saw ; which prophets and kings and righteous men had desired to see, but saw not ; the righteous of old who had but imperfect apprehensions and glimpses of a truth yet undeveloped ; to whom the benefits of atonement and spiritual guidance were indeed applied, but in a way they knew not ;—who were without that objective realization of these benefits in their Divine Source which it is only for explicit faith in the Incarnate WORD to supply. Blessed, therefore, beyond theirs were the eyes of Simeon : still more the eyes of her to whom his benediction was addressed, whose transcendent blessedness in this respect all generations proclaim, by whom the Incarnate LORD of life was conceived, and marked with pondering heart, down to the sharp sword of His passion and the joy of His resurrection : blessed likewise were the eyes of the Apostles, to whom, even before that consummation, the LORD had in those memorable words ascribed a blessedness far greater than that of Abraham, or of Moses, or of David. But the blessedness of which He then spoke is extended far more by the words which we have been now considering, pro-

nounced after His days of mortal humiliation were for ever passed : the eyes blessed are not those of the body merely, but of the inner man : the happy sight enjoyed by Apostles and Evangelists is ours also, who have believed through their word. Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed : who against the things of sense, the temptations of the world and Satan, against the perplexities of the natural mind, the misgivings of a fearful, and the lacerations of a wounded heart, have opposed a firm faith in facts remote in time, but indelible and eternal in effect : who have admitted to their hearts and understandings the purifying truth, that He whom the Church now contemplates, He who was once born in the manger of Bethlehem, is indeed their LORD and their God : He truly died for their sins, He is truly risen for their justification : He is their Saviour, and will be their Judge.

SERMON IV.

CHRISTIANITY IN ITS DEVELOPMENT AND PERFECTION ILLUSTRATED FROM THE EXAMPLE OF S. JOHN.

(Preached on S. John's Day, 1846.)

S. JOHN XXI. 20—24.

THEN PETER, TURNING ABOUT, SEETH THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED FOLLOWING, WHICH ALSO LEANED ON HIS BREAST AT SUPPER, AND SAID, LORD, WHICH IS HE THAT BETRAYETH THEE? PETER SEEING HIM SAITH TO JESUS, LORD, AND WHAT SHALL THIS MAN DO? JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME, WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME. THEN WENT THIS SAYING ABROAD AMONG THE BRETHREN, THAT THAT DISCIPLE SHOULD NOT DIE: YET JESUS SAID NOT UNTO HIM, HE SHOULD NOT DIE, BUT, IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME, WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? THIS IS THE DISCIPLE WHICH TESTIFIETH OF THESE THINGS, AND WROTE THESE THINGS; AND WE KNOW THAT HIS TESTIMONY IS TRUE.

AMONG those to whom the LORD JESUS CHRIST assigned thrones of judgment in His coming kingdom, and who are commemorated with proportionate honour by the subjects of that kingdom, on the anniversaries of their entrance upon their glorious

rest, none present a more engaging object of contemplation than he to whom these words of the Gospel relate—the great Apostle and Evangelist whom it is the Church's custom to remember on this day. The emphatic singularity of his designation as “the disciple whom JESUS loved,”—the mystery which encompassed, and in some degree still seems to overshadow the Divine announcement of his destiny to his fellow Apostle,—are made yet more striking and significant to us by the circumstance that the subject of these mysterious words is also their recorder. It cannot but be so when we perceive what the narrative itself impresses irresistibly on every reader, that it is dictated by no self-exalting, no self-reflecting spirit, but by a deep devotion of the author's whole mind and thoughts to the speaker, the Incarnate WORD; whose special love to himself inspires awe as well as gratitude:—an awe that suffers him not to name himself beside others apparently less favoured; while every word that fell from his LORD is on that account treasured up with reverence, as full of weighty meaning, fraught with the mysteries of an eternal life.

If then the aged Apostle at Ephesus, when sensibly approaching the close of his varied course,—a course most painful and most successful,—thus carefully remembers and records the prediction concerning it long since uttered by his LORD on the lake of Gennesareth, it cannot be unprofitable for us to connect these two distant portions of his life

together. For an exemplification in its highest degree of the grace of the everlasting Gospel, it cannot be without profit to us, if we compare S. John, such as he was when he wrote these words, S. John the Divine, the Apostle, Evangelist, and Confessor of JESUS CHRIST, with him who received the prophetic intimation in earlier years, immediately after what appears the last exercise of his original worldly calling; or if, going but two or three years further back to a scene presenting some remarkable analogies to this, we compare the great Apostle with John the son of Zebedee the fisherman, as he was called from his occupation to be a fisher of men. It may be, that even this was not his first introduction to our LORD as his teacher; though it is the first with which the three historical Gospels supply us. In that before untold page of Christian history, which his own first chapter contains, S. John's earlier proceedings may possibly be contained, though his name is characteristically suppressed. Of the two disciples of the Baptist precursor in the valley of the Jordan, who heard their master point to the SON of GOD, and were thus led to follow after JESUS—one, says our Evangelist, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother: the other is unnamed; but the opinion has great probability, which we find in several of the ancients, that it was the Evangelist himself. The minuteness of the account of the LORD's deportment on that occasion, His invitation of the two inquirers to His temporary dwelling

and the particularities of time annexed (though no other particulars are attached) to the relation of this remarkable interview and its effects; all are in accordance with the truth of this supposition: it is just what might be expected from S. John, if this were indeed his first acquaintance with the Saviour. And if it were so, then what he proceeds to relate concerning S. Andrew's communication of his interview and his conviction to his more distinguished brother, must have been but the counterpart of what he himself performed to his own brother, S. James, either then or in their native land of Galilee: and thus both the brothers may have had the preparation which we know was possessed by Andrew and Peter—for that more summary and decisive call which bade them leave all and follow JESUS. But whether thus prepared or not, that call was by them immediately obeyed: forsaking the ship and their nets with Zebedee their father, they attached themselves as inseparable attendants to Him who had no settled home or habitation; but whose words, though now but imperfectly apprehended, were to them clearly more precious than the gain, or the ease, or the comfort of any secular condition.

Admitted thus to constant association with the Incarnate Saviour, we find these two sons of Zebedee, in conjunction with S. Peter, distinguished by a higher degree of intimacy with their LORD than the other nine whom He had similarly called to be His

constant attendants. A certain ardour and energy of mind must have been then, as since, united to the gentleness and affectionateness of S. John's character: since in the designation of the twelve Apostles we find the remarkable name of Boanerges, sons of Thunder, attached particularly by CHRIST to these two brothers, whose words of light and power were hereafter to electrify and awaken the world. Of the manner in which their zeal for their Master's cause was manifested in that state of imperfect knowledge, and yet undeveloped faith, we have a striking instance in the request to invoke destruction on the inhospitable Samaritans. To do as Elias did was a natural wish in Hebrew youths whose religious recollections of the old time were quickened by zealous attachment to a far greater than Elias now amongst them: and to their minds doubtless the guilt of Ahaziah's captains, who in mere obedience to their king went to apprehend the man of God, seemed (and not unreasonably seemed) less than that of the inhuman villagers on the Samaritan border; who of their own free motion not only refused a night's lodging to the undistinguished Benefactor of all men, but accompanied their refusal with abhorrence of the temple of the Most High, and the place where His honour dwelt at Jerusalem. Did Elias say without rebuke twice, "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty"?—and did the LORD of heaven twice do according to his word?

And should not then the divine mission of JESUS their greater Master be equally vindicated? or, if the offenders were spared, should it not be after such humiliation and repentance before the acknowledged power of the insulted LORD, as was manifested by the third captain to the stern Tishbite prophet, when he prayed that the lives of himself and his fifty might be precious in his sight, and found mercy accordingly? This was indeed the natural reasoning of men who, nurtured only in the ancient examples of Divine power and its credentials to an opposing world, were ignorant of that force of meek endurance which alone should subdue the prince of this world, and of the mighty energies of His Cross and Passion, who came not to destroy but to save. But natural and apparently inevitable as was the error of their zealous request, it meets with marked reprehension from their LORD. They are reprov'd for not having even then discerned in the pure beneficence of all His miraculous works, a spirit of kindness to the unthankful and evil, surpassing all the manifestations of Divine virtue in the age now passing away; and for not having adjusted to this more excellent spirit the thoughts and purposes of their own. In a dispensation that was preparatory and imperfect, it was becoming that Elias, while he raised the son of the grateful widow of Sarepta to new life, should slay the idolatrous prophets of Jezebel's court, and consume by his imprecation the messengers of her impious son: but

now the time was approaching for that blood to be shed which made atonement for enemies : and in the course of long suffering to all such, the first called to careful imitation of their LORD, were His Apostles and future Martyrs.

- Another instance is found at a time closer to that consummation, of the yet imperfect state of both the brothers ; one that might appear to involve a defect from the highest morals even of the elder dispensation. Yet to this instance also we may apply nearly the same considerations as to the preceding. When the throne of CHRIST the King of Israel was expected to be soon set up in Jerusalem, and JESUS of Nazareth was believed in as the divinely destined occupant of that throne, most natural was it for a fond mother, whose two sons had attached themselves to Him from the first, and continued His faithful adherents under every trial,—to desire for them distinctions in CHRIST's kingdom proportionate to her sense of their merit, even seats at the right and at the left hand of the LORD in His glory. Nor can we wonder on any merely human principles that the minds of the two affectionate sons should sympathize with the mother's wish, and desire on their own account as well as hers that they might be thus signally favoured by Him who commanded not only the winds and waves, but demons and death to obey Him : no wonder therefore is it that they should either offer the petition themselves, as one Gospel seems to intimate, or as another

more exactly represents it, allow her to prefer the ambitious request for them. Their concurrence is sufficiently evinced by the fact that the LORD's answer is addressed, not to Salome, but to them : and most remarkable is that answer. It is not, as in the address to the other indignant disciples that followed, a rebuke of this kind of emulation, and the inculcation of a very different spirit, even that of little children, on His jealous and contending followers : it is simply that they who applied for this particular distinction knew not what it was they were asking for. They knew not that in this kingdom, unlike all other empires,—even that of David His father, to which they most naturally assimilated it,—the eminence in glory was obtained through eminence in suffering : in the kingdom of the Crucified the cross must precede the crown : he who is unprepared for the one, is equally unfit for and unworthy of the other : and therefore this is the question put to them ; “ Can ye drink of the cup—the cup of sharp sorrow—that I drink of ? can ye be baptized with the baptism—that of blood—that I am baptized with ? ” They answer boldly, “ We are able : ” and they were right and blessed in so answering ; however little apprised at that time of the full import of the terms to which they pledged compliance, and in which their gracious LORD takes them at their word. Confident of His goodness who requires nothing of any man that is impossible, and nothing of the true subjects of His kingdom

which His grace will not abundantly enable them to perform,—conscious, moreover, of the sincerity of their own purpose, however dark as to the future,—of that sincerity which is surely followed by the gift of ample grace for every need,—they answer, “We are able :” even as every Christian confidently says, “I will,” to his baptismal engagement of entire obedience. And the assurance immediately follows—more gracious in this new economy than any gratification of selfish will—that of His cup of sorrows they should indeed taste, with His baptism of endurance even to death they should indeed be baptized ; the honour and the happiness of following their LORD in being made perfect through sufferings should be indeed theirs : but the end and the issue of this it was not for Him as their Master on earth to apportion to them or to any other : it is fixed in that Divine counsel and predestination, which with the end foreknows the means and the conditions through which alone it can be attained : and it is only when the race is run, that the event will be known, who have so accomplished their course of faith and patience as to have earned the highest rank in His heavenly kingdom. This answer CHRIST gave : and while the one part of that answer will remain to the day of final doom a closed mystery, the information that He did vouchsafe to both the brothers is verified most amply to our perception by the events, then future, but now fixed in the early records of the Gospel. Of the two Apostles who drew from the LORD this

information respecting His coming kingdom, is it not most remarkable that one was the first of the twelve to meet the stroke of death, the other the last ? S. James the Great, by the conspicuousness of his primary labours in CHRIST's cause, provokes the rage of the first royal persecutor of the Church : by the sword of Herod Agrippa he is baptized with the baptism of blood, and wins early the crown of martyrdom. S. John, on the other hand, destined to outlive the several outbreaks of fierce persecution which removed his brother and the other Apostles successively to their rest in CHRIST ; after not only witnessing, but sharing many of these persecutions ; after surviving the cauldron of Domitian, and other approaches of the fiery ordeal, with the full purpose and resolution of the most tried martyr ; after tarrying for his LORD's coming with more protracted faith and patience than all his brethren ; at length, unlike them all, descends to his grave in peace. So different in circumstance was the verification of the selfsame promise to the two brothers : as if to exemplify to all classes of the faithful, that there are various modes of drinking the cup of CHRIST, and being baptized even with that baptism with which He was finally baptized.

But in this partial anticipation of the Apostle's career, we must not overlook the development of his character from the point to which it has already been clearly traced. Two particulars have been mentioned in which he, in conjunction with his bro-

ther, had incurred censure : one other instance there is, in which he alone is checked by his LORD, where his zeal outran the forbearance enjoined by Him on all : no other instances remain except those which in the time of the extreme humiliation and passion they incurred in common with all the Apostles. And here still the peculiar affection of our LORD for S. John is conspicuous. The last supper, of which there is a retrospective mention in my text, was prepared on the Thursday before the Passion, by sending Peter and John before Him from Bethany to Jerusalem. And at the supper, Peter deems not his own great intimacy with our LORD sufficient for propounding to Him the question, “ Who it was that should betray Him ? ” who was the miserable man in their chosen company to whom the marks of election and special love should turn to seals of deeper reprobation ; for whom it had been good had he never been born. He moves John, while reclining next our LORD, to propose that question ;— no envy or jealousy disturbing the friendship, which here, as in many other occasions, we may observe between these two Apostles. In the Agony of the garden that followed, it is Peter, and James, and John, who are called to be nearest to the suffering LORD, as they had been alone with Him in the mount of Transfiguration : and here, when drowsiness and sorrow unite to prevent their watching with Him as He directed, their neglect is followed by the predicted consequence, when the dark hour

of His apprehension arrives. All forsake their LORD: he not excepted, the chief of their number, who began, with blamable impetuosity, to make show of resistance, and who had felt most confidence in himself: and when he, Simon Peter, afterwards followed timidly at a distance the impious band that bore his Master away, it is but an unsupported conjecture that supposes John to have been the other disciple mentioned in that part of the history. But we know that S. John was present when the presence of no other of the Apostles is recorded, when the awful scene of the crucifixion was near its close: having with pious affection supported thither the Blessed Mother, who with Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, the mother of S. James the Less, stood near the foot of the Cross. And here it is that he receives from the dying LORD Himself the charge of that Mother as her adopted son: to him, as the LORD's specially beloved Disciple, is that charge committed, rather than to her nephews and former members of her household, though that number included two eminent Apostles, S. James the Less, and S. Jude. Will it disturb the impression of this most affecting incident to remark what a confutation it affords of the opinion which some now strangely love to revive from heretics of old, that these two excellent persons were her sons, (to whom the two first Gospels so clearly assign another mother)? To whom could the words, "Woman, behold thy son!" be addressed by Him who came

to sanctify all human relations, but to one who were otherwise son-less? who, in losing Him from the earth, her great earthly as well as heavenly support, had lost her only Son,—the first-born, the last, the only one, that the most pious Christian conception could voluntarily assign to her whom the HOLY GHOST had overshadowed for the generation of the Incarnate WORD,—whom the Church ever designates as by her distinguishing constant title, the Blessed Virgin Mary. And to whom were the words spoken, “Behold thy Mother!” but to one that felt the undivided obligation of filial duty and tenderness, now devolved by that charge upon himself? one whose heart responded to that charge as that of no other among the disciples could; who for the sake of JESUS, his LORD and GOD, looked with love and reverence to her whose relation to Him has made her blessed to all generations; and who accordingly made his home to be hers till the day of her decease; when falling asleep in CHRIST, [not assumed up to the throne of heaven, as a far later story would tell,] she awaits in assured happiness with all faithful souls the perfect consummation of bliss hereafter.

Such then as S. John approved himself towards his LORD in the days of His humiliation and mortal weakness, when He was hidden from carnal eyes by the circumstances of obscurity or of scandal that encompassed Him, such did the Apostle approve himself far more, when CHRIST’S resurrection be-

spoke the power of His kingdom to be already begun, and the heaven which His death had merited actually opened to believers. When that message of a life that should never end first came faintly and doubtfully to the depressed minds of the Apostles from the reports of Mary Magdalene and others, it is again Peter and John in whom we observe the first desire to verify their story. In the race they ran to the sepulchre, it is S. John who arrives there first, though awe and hesitation restrain him from investigating the matter: in this Peter precedes, and then both see and believe. A few days after, in Galilee, when both the sons of Zebedee, with S. Peter, and S. Thomas, and three other disciples, are found once more fishing on the lake of Tiberias, and a figure on the shore directs them how to cast the nets, and the consequence is such a multitude of fishes as they are not able to draw,—it is John whose instinct of love penetrates the disguise, and tells Peter that it is the LORD. It might strike the recollection of both how a few short years before the same LORD had in His mortal days given a similar direction,—a like miraculous draught following: though then they drew the net; now they could not: then the net brake; but now, for all the greater multitude of fishes, when it was drawn to land, the net was unbroken: then the ship began to sink, and Simon Peter, affrighted, besought the LORD to depart from him, a sinful man; whereas now, as soon as he heard that it was

the LORD, and believed it was so, he plunged into the water to go to Him. These circumstances, symbolizing the greater power of the risen LORD,—or rather the greater power He obtained for the fishers of men, when the mysteries of His redemption were accomplished,—were not lost on S. John ; who, ever calmer than S. Peter, while his emotions were the deepest, tranquilly remained with the rest in the vessel till it was brought to the shore. And then, when the awe-stricken but joyful company gather round Him who had thus appeared to them, and “ none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art thou ? knowing that it was the LORD”,—then it is that the scene of the text occurs. When Simon Peter had thrice answered to his LORD’s moving interrogations, and thrice confessed with pure affection Him whom he had thrice denied ; when he had heard also the thrice repeated charge to feed His flock, both the sheep and the lambs ; when also as assurances of his LORD’s love to him, he receives what only the Cross of CHRIST has turned into a message of love, the account of the death whereby he should glorify God, with outstretched arms and limbs bound by barbarous persecutors ; then it is that he turns and sees S. John behind : and then he asks his LORD, if such commission and such honourable martyrdom were his own, what was then to be the fate of this still more loved disciple. The Saviour puts aside the question of mere curiosity with a mild rebuke, while He tells him that his sole concern is to follow His steps and

obey His word, whatever be the fate of S. John; even if his life should be prolonged to the time of the Second Advent, or beyond the time when the greatest sign of the Advent had occurred:—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Among the disciples present, who durst ask no further question, it is not wonderful that this should be understood as a declaration that S. John was actually to protract his days till his LORD should come again in glory: nevertheless, as the Apostle himself proceeds to declare, this was a mere inference of theirs, not warranted by our LORD's own words. "JESUS said not unto him, He shall not die; but—If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The words were uttered in the way of supposition, not of prediction: and having thus carefully repeated them, the Evangelist adds that himself who records these words is the person of whom they were spoken by JESUS CHRIST. "This is the disciple which testified of these things, and spoke these things: and we know that his testimony is true." He it was, who to avoid all error as to our LORD's teaching, comprised these out of his innumerable sayings in that one blessed book: that all like him might know, and reading might believe.

The records of Christianity tell, to a considerable extent, how the beloved Apostle and Evangelist realized these words of his Divine Master; in following Him with Peter and the rest of His faithful servants. When the HOLY SPIRIT at length made

them possessed of Christian light and Christian heroism, no less than of miraculous gifts, again we find Peter and John together : they are associated in the first great work they performed in the name of their risen LORD, the healing of the cripple at the Beautiful gate of the Temple ; in their joint fearless confession before the chief priests that would silence them by menaces ; in their imprisonment and release for distant labours ; and in their joint mission, after the martyrdom of S. Stephen, to minister confirmation to those whom Philip the deacon had baptized in Samaria. We find these two again associated as pillars of the Church with S. James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, when, after the martyrdom of S. James the Great, S. Paul reports to the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem his mission to evangelize the Gentiles. And this closes the historical notices of S. John which we obtain from the inspired records of the Gospel ; but by no means all that we know with tolerable certainty respecting him ; partly from the ordinary sources of subsequent Christian history, and partly from the standing evidence to their author, borne by some of the later books of the New Testament.

Passing over what is either fabulous or doubtful, we know that S. John, probably after the decease of the Blessed Virgin Mary in his charge, made the Churches of Asia Minor his particular care, and that of Ephesus especially, of which before his

coming S. Timothy had been made Bishop by the Apostle of the Gentiles. We know that the heresies with which some even then were labouring to pervert the truth of the Gospel were objects of his zealous attention and opposition: particularly the Gnostic errors which would represent our LORD's assumption of human flesh to be merely apparent and unreal, and that He was but one of many successive emanations from the Fulness of DEITY: against which antichristian statements he every where declares strongly in various parts of his writings, that the true SON of GOD, the WORD who was GOD, was made true man, and lived and died as man upon earth, as all His Apostles witnessed; that He is the Only begotten of the FATHER, the one source of salvation, through whom alone, as the CHRIST, we have the unction of the Holy One, are enlightened, purified, and blessed. Of the zeal displayed by the meek but fervent Apostle against these heresies and their abettors, striking proofs are given us on the unquestionable authority of his disciple, S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna and Martyr: some of them very little answering the description of what is now termed charity; yet in strict keeping with the tone of his writings in the New Testament: for certainly flying from a bath, because the heretic Cerinthus was there, indicates no stronger abhorrence of the errors that would lead men from the source of salvation, than his writing, that if any man came with any other doctrine than that of the Apostles re-

specting the Incarnation of JESUS CHRIST, he should neither be received nor saluted by the faithful ; that he that bade him “ God speed,” was a sharer in his evil deeds. His Gospel was written not more to present some striking features of our LORD’s history, which the three more perfect histories of His ministry had all omitted ; than to present them in connexion with the mysteries of faith, and the fundamental doctrine of the Divine Incarnation. Unlike the other Gospels, it was written after the destruction of the Jewish state or polity : and after, in the language of Christians, of Hebrew as well as Gentile believers, the word “ Jew ” indicated a religion rather than a nation,—an adherent of Moses and the Prophets who rejected JESUS CHRIST, rather than a native of Judæa. These, and some other like peculiarities, which recent critics would urge as throwing doubts on the genuineness of this divine and immortal work, are rather proofs of the truth of the tradition of the Church respecting it ; that it was the composition of the Apostle in his advanced years, when sojourning among Gentiles.

The Providence of God permitted not that the stroke of martyrdom should close the great Apostle’s life : and when the cruelty of the last of the twelve Cæsars was provoked by his preaching the Gospel at Rome, the Almighty quelled the heat of the boiling oil, and preserved His servant unhurt, like the three holy children in Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace. In his banishment by the same tyrant

to the Isle of Patmos, the SPIRIT of GOD still abode with His faithful confessor, and enabled him to write that wonderful book which closes the Canon of Scripture ; describing under images which the event alone can fully clear, the future destinies of the Church and the world, and the awful judgment passed on their several ways and works by Him who liveth and was dead,—who liveth for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death. At this late period of his life there is a memorable and well attested history of his reclaiming by affectionate exhortation a youth who had so far apostatized from the faith as to become a captain of robbers : a fact which to some readers of his Epistles may be needed as a proof that he admitted the restoration of the lapsed brother, as well as the regeneration of the stranger and infidel ; that even when baptismal grace has been wasted and apparently extinct, Divine mercy may restore the wanderer to that purity which should have been always his. At length, at an age far advanced beyond the ordinary term of life, the venerated Apostle and Evangelist fell asleep in the LORD at Ephesus : after exhortations repeated again and again to all the faithful around to love one another, to observe in all things that spirit of charity which is the bond of all virtues in CHRIST's religion,—without which, zeal, and eloquence, and faith, and knowledge of mysteries, will be vain and worthless.

The reflections which this great Apostle's career excite must all have reference to this : and as love

is the principal idea which the Incarnation of the SON of GOD suggests to us, it is by no unhappy allotment that the day assigned by tradition to the blessed Apostle's rest is on this second day after the feast of the Nativity ; when also on this year we are keeping the weekly festival of the LORD's new birth to immortality. Let us then mark how this grand principle of Christian religion is set forth in S. John's person, and in his writings.

In the first place, what learn we in this respect from the individual case of him whose history we have thus largely considered ? Twelve only out of mankind, even out of the company of believers in Himself, did the LORD select as constant companions and friends ; twelve, comprising one in whom a subtle sin at length extinguished love, and turned the trusted adherent to a traitor : and of these twelve again three only were selected for peculiar marks of intimacy : Peter, James, and John alone accompany Him to the chamber where life is first restored by His word ; these only witness His glory at Tabor, and His agony at Gethsemane. Thus did the Incarnate LORD sanction and hallow the principle of special friendship, as well as of general brotherhood and universal charity. But yet further : among these three there is one only of whom it could be said with eminence that he was " the Disciple whom JESUS loved." And that one is not he whom the LORD made president or chief of the company : not he to whom, on his confession of the fundamental mystery

of Christian faith, He promised the keys of His kingdom, and that power of binding and loosing in the Church which was afterwards conferred on all the eleven: not he to whom even then CHRIST, after exacting expressions of a love beyond those surrounding him, gave a more solemn commission to feed the flock whom He had purchased. It is not Simon, son of Jonas,—not S. Peter, prince of the Apostles,—but John, son of Zebedee, who is the Disciple that JESUS loved: and this separation of the greater friendship from the higher charge, thus marked in the Evangelic narrative, cannot but invite us to study and ponder its import.

No subject, indeed, should be approached with more reserve and awful reverence than that of the human affections of Him who is the Divine LORD of all. But thus much we cannot well fail to perceive and acknowledge here: that the heart most congenial to that of JESUS the Saviour of mankind, the heart that bore most the reflex of His own ineffable benignity, was one which also resembled His in entire disengagement from the nearest and dearest of all earthly ties. In S. Peter's case, we see that the engagement of holy matrimony, which is the mystical symbol of CHRIST's union with His Church, and the best discipline of sanctification to the mass of the Christian people, is also no obstacle whatever to charges properly spiritual,—nor yet to the very highest of them,—even that of feeding and governing both pastors and people, in the flock which

the great Shepherd has gathered and redeemed with His blood. While perceiving this in the case of the prince of the Apostles,—while ready to use it in vindication of our branch of the Church Catholic, against those who choose to forget this fact, and would wish us to forget it also,—it is no less right that we should recognize in the case of S. John the truth of one saying of our LORD, of which He pronounced that all could not receive it, and which many among ourselves are determined to forget ; viz. : that there are those who, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, have renounced what is to all permitted and honourable, and who have a high spiritual blessing in that renunciation. There are special advantages which S. Paul ascribes to this abstinence,—particularly that of attending to the things of the LORD without the obligation of pleasing or providing for lower objects of attachment ; and also that of escaping those inflictions of bitter grief, which, not only in times of persecution, but at all times, are ordinarily thought by Divine mercy necessary to balance the far greater earthly happiness of the other condition, and to force on the heirs of heaven the conviction that short of this there is no abiding home of their best affections. All these advantages of the purer state were eminently possessed by S. John : he had no distractions, no tumults or agitations of spirit, to disturb the eagle-eyed contemplations by which, according to his usual symbol, he looked to the Sun of Righteousness, in whom is the

source and principle of all charities ; in whom he beheld all truth, and loved all that was to be loved. We have often, in the present age, to defend our primitive brethren on this point; to vindicate the species of honour, which they did ascribe to virginity and celibacy, against the imputation of what they really most strongly abhorred, and most zealously denounced,—the heretical notions which held matter, and generation especially, to be essentially sinful. And to the mention of this, there is a further inducement than that of cautioning our studious youth against the sin of joining the religionists of the day who, in vilifying the Ancient Church of CHRIST, are in reality, whether they know it or not, reviling its Founder and His Apostles : we have reasons more obviously bearing on the present concerns of mankind. To the many, the far too many in the present state of society, to whom the blessings of domestic life are made all but unattainable ;—to those also, (whom I would not confound with the others,) to whom, as in this place, the gifts of pious and munificent founders for the preservation of religion and learning, have given inducements, unknown to other men, for declining these same blessings for themselves ;—to both these classes it cannot be useless to present a view of things by which a deprivation, otherwise probably very hurtful to them in several ways, may be turned to a means of the highest spiritual good. Perhaps if they will view their condition rightly, God has in special love to their souls opened to them a

more excellent way than falls to the lot of others whom they might sinfully envy : they will find it so, if they follow the example of the most elevated of His servants, and make the best of their present means in pious self-devotion to His glory and the good of others. And if the great Exemplar Himself appear too highly raised above our ordinary condition to be viewed in this particular aspect, of an example of single life,—let it be seen in the Disciple whom He specially loved above all others, the ever happy and peaceful S. John.

But more universal instructions than this,—not peculiar to the solitary or to the domestic,—not to any age, or sex, or profession,—are found in the example, as in the writings, of this eminently blessed Apostle. If the love of God to us, inspiring our love to Him in return, be the great principle of his life and writings, as of all Christianity; we learn there also that salutarily severe lesson which must ever come in its train, that to attain this love we must renounce the love of all which is not of God. “Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world : if any man love the world, the love of the FATHER is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the FATHER, but of the world.” We cannot love God while idols like these are occupying our affections, and continually more darkening the sense by which we discern the love or the purity of God ; neither can we truly love

mankind while we view them not in His light, but in such guise as these idolatries will certainly present them to our minds ; as objects severally of fear, or of envy, or of contempt. To avoid feelings thus opposed to all charity, we must seek our citizenship in a higher world, the world which the Incarnate Saviour has alone opened to us ; and the example of disregard to lower objects which His manger and stall at Bethlehem now teach us, is taught us by all His Apostles, and Saints, and Confessors in the world. In the Church, where His holy mysteries of love are ever perpetuated, and a visible witness ever set up against the falsehood and the selfishness of worldly life, let us fix the home of our thoughts and resolves ; that living and acting as CHRIST and all His Saints have done in the world, we may like them not be of the world. As we are already born anew out of this world into that which is eternal, into which every thing worth loving or regarding here either precedes or must soon follow us, let us cultivate as our best possession the citizenship there sealed to us, in careful pursuance of our baptismal renunciation, and perseverance in all offices of piety and charity. For “the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

S E R M O N V.

ON THE NATIVITY.

(Preached on Christmas-Day, 1846.)

ISAIAH IX. 6.

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN:
AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER:
AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUN-
SELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER,
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

To us, far more than to the Israelites of old, are these words of the prophetic Spirit addressed. To us, as actual partakers of that promise which they beheld but through the distance of ages, belongs indeed in strictness the true right of appropriating it: for it is in our condition and experience only that its terms are exactly verified. With God, indeed, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years but one day: and He might commission His servant to announce an event as present, because fixed in His immutable counsel, though at the distance of eight centuries. But to the human hearers

of that message, even to the inspired bearer himself, the event was not thus closely present: and it is for us—even for us who eighteen centuries after the event, are now met together to commemorate it,—to adopt the words in a measure of intelligence and truth which neither the prophet nor his people could attain. We, for whose learning all the things in ancient Scripture are recorded,—without whom, as we are also told, they could not be made perfect,—we who have been admitted to behold the prediction accomplished, and its strangest circumstances made plain, in the writings of Evangelists and Apostles,—we who have been admitted into actual fellowship with the Incarnate Son, regenerate through Him, and made children by adoption and grace, called by His name, adopted as His brethren and fellow-heirs of heaven,—we, the members of the Christian Church, have the true right to say, that this Child is born, this Son is given unto *us*.

Yes, my brethren, even now we are called on to review and to rejoice in this adorable mystery: we are invited by these expressive words to apprehend it as a thing still present; and, however transacted once for all, and now more remote in the past time, than it was from the men of Isaiah's day in the future,—yet in its memory ever near, and in its application ever new to us. This Child *is* born, this Son *is* given unto us. However our circumstances may appear to many of us as placing us farther off from its appropriation than those to whom the prophet spoke;

now that the ardour of expectation is long past, and the event is no longer recent as an object of recollection ; when the superior knowledge and happiness we have as Christians, leave us so generally unmindful of this the only source of it,—and the mind accustomed to hear of it with an indifferent familiarity, too often seems to conceive of it more as a legendary story than an abiding truth ; now that the gladness and festivity which the piety of our ancestors well associated with its celebration at this season, is sadly dissevered from all recollection of its event in the minds of the many,—with some even overwhelms or obscures it ; now that faith in its adorable mystery is by several even among ourselves actually rejected, and many more have lost all power of apprehending it, through the love of sin ; yet we thankfully trust this appropriation has not passed from us yet. There are those yet among us, whom the return of Christmas reminds of something better than mere merriment or secular festivity ; to whom the Word made flesh and dwelling among us, appears in His true character “full of Grace and Truth ;” who recognize in this Holy Nativity the principle and source of that second heavenly birth to ourselves, which has raised us through the Divine condescension above the wants and the miseries of our fallen nature, which has invested our social life with new features, with the symbols and anticipations of immortality. These are they whose hearts go with the hymns of the Church and the carols

of the faithful people at this season, faintly it may be, yet truly apprehending their blessedness, and desiring yet more to apprehend it: these, the true living members of the Church, make good these words to themselves, through the Spirit of CHRIST, that speaks to the whole mystical body alike, "Unto us a Child is born: unto us a Son is given."

If such is the spirit of the Church in this ~~as~~ⁱⁿ her other festive seasons, strange must it appear that there should be any amongst us of professed seriousness and earnestness in religion, who denounce this kind of celebration, because carnal men mistake or abuse it; or who imagine that because the subject of CHRIST coming into the world ought never to be absent from our recollection, therefore our taking this particular time to celebrate it, were a vanity or a superstition. Such sentiments are not now so openly urged among us as they were two centuries or more since: yet are they heard not unfrequently still: and the spirit which dictated such objections exists in quarters where there is no such formal enunciation of them; so extensive has been in the past age the inoculation of the national mind with this strange view of things. For strange indeed in principle, and equally miserable in argument, are such objections to the celebrations of Catholic Christendom: when it is recollected that this fact of the Nativity is but one, though a primary and fundamental one, among many facts of the Gospel; the opening of that great scheme which was consummated

by CHRIST'S Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT. As the mind of man is not so constituted, as to survey all at once in their fulness of detail, the things which most nearly concern it,—as in all matters of secular remembrance, we are accordingly accustomed to have days of annual commemoration,—as in the old dispensation, yearly festivals were ordained for the religious remembrance of what concerned the ancient Israelites, which were types of better things to come, and that by God's express ordinance ;—who will say, that in the filial dispensation of the Gospel, the Church which is His Spouse and body, may not, and ought not to commemorate at the proper times, the substance of these great events; as the Israelites celebrated their shadows? Nothing is opposed to this, but an arbitrary conception of Christianity, as merely subjective in its nature; together with a most unchristian dislike and contempt of our brethren in the faith of every former age; as well as of hostility or contemptuous inattention to the existing rule of the Church. Certain it is, that from the very beginning of the Gospel, the Apostles of CHRIST did at Easter and Pentecost celebrate the great events of human redemption and the foundation of the Church, as constantly as the Jews kept their Passover and Feast of Weeks at the same seasons. And now for the celebration of CHRIST'S Nativity: what if we should not be so certain of its occurrence at this time of the year, as we are certain of our

LORD'S Resurrection at Easter, and His SPIRIT'S descent at Whitsuntide? The uncertainty, if allowed to the utmost, ought not in reason to affect our practice in this respect. If the venerable tradition which fixes our LORD'S Birth on the twenty-fifth of December, were granted to be more questionable than it appears on examination to be, or were the usual arguments against it as strong as they are for the most part weak and groundless; is it not enough for every Christian of humble and catholic spirit, that now in the days from this time to the Epiphany, all the Churches of the East and the West unite in thankful remembrances of their GOD and SAVIOUR coming into the world, and that they have done so for the last sixteen centuries? Is not this, I say, reason enough why he should unite his devout meditations with theirs; and thus proceed in the Christian year from Advent to Pentecost, to realize in their proper order the cardinal mysteries of salvation?

Let us then proceed to the great subject itself, as this text of the evangelical Prophet announces it. Who is the person that is called a Child and a Son born to us, in the selfsame sentence which calls Him the Mighty God? We have the answer in the Gospel and the Epistle of the New Testament, which this day's services have set before us. He was the WORD who was in the beginning, the beginning of all things, before all worlds; personally distinct from GOD the FATHER who begat Him from

eternity, for it is said, "The WORD was with God";—but One with Him in the entire unity of that Godhead which is in both alike, for it is added, "The WORD was God." He it was, who was in the beginning with God, following the description of S. John, the Creator and Enlightener of all the world, Himself the uncreated Light and Life of men: and it was He, this same WORD, who was made flesh,—truly became Man for us, of the substance of His Virgin Mother—was born as at this day, and who dwelt, or literally, who fixed his tent among us. Do we need the categorical language of subsequent confessions and definitions to give effect to these words of the beloved disciple? We need them as we do, only because of the resistance which the human mind has made to the admission of Divinity in human flesh, evading variously its inscrutable mystery by some statement that denies—either the distinction of Persons in the Godhead, or the singularity of the one Person who was incarnate,—or the verity and entireness of that Incarnation. But whichever of these modes of evasion be taken, there is no heresy on this subject which these words of S. John do not by anticipation condemn. "The WORD was with God, and was God; and became flesh, and fixed His tabernacle of humanity among us; and we, (we the Apostles of the Man CHRIST JESUS,) beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER; the WORD full of Grace and Truth."

But let us look to the further explication of this,

which we have also heard from the inspired Epistle to the Hebrews. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Who is this Son, who is not spoken of as one of the Prophets, but as above them all; whose instruction is thus pointedly distinguished from theirs, not only in degree, but in kind? Let the following words of the Apostle tell, "Whom He hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also He made the worlds: who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, (more literally, the radiation of His glory, and the impress, or stamped copy, of His substance,) and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." The sacred text proceeds to say, that this was not merely a new reward of His obedience as Mediator, but a taking again of that which, by right of a Son, He possessed from the beginning. For it says, "being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my SON, this day have I begotten thee?" This is an honour, it appears, denied to the highest of created beings; to those who in an inferior and improper sense of the terms are truly called the sons of God: it is an honour due to Him as Only-begotten Son, of the proper substance of that eternal Deity, who is

alone to be worshipped. For the next verse expressly affirms this; "When He bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, He saith, Let all the Angels of God worship Him." Do we need a yet more explicit proof that this Person is very God? We have it in the words that follow; words also, (it is particularly to be noticed,) which as expressly affirm Him to be very man. "Of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flaming fire. But of the Son He saith, (in the words of the forty-fifth Psalm,) "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom: Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." In the verses that follow, the Apostle quotes another Psalm, ascribing creative power, omnipotence and invariableness to this same Person: the same Person who is exalted above His fellows of mankind for His obedience, and is yet in essential nature the Eternal God; so addressed by God the Father, as one whose throne and dominion is eternal.

Such then in nature and in essence was He whose birth we this day celebrate. Could He, indeed, be less in dignity, whose Nativity, now commemorated throughout the world, was announced from its very commencement? When our first parents listened to the seducing serpent, this was the seed of the woman promised by the

offended LORD, who should bruise the serpent's head. As such, the faithful patriarchs from Adam and Noah downward, believed His future coming: thus in the shape of God Incarnate to deliver man from the plagues of demoniacal bondage, did the same expectation descend in the mythologies of heathen nations. Thus, the best of the Gentile world had expectations of their future LORD: and obscure prefigurations, even in the midst of corrupt and idolatrous fables announced His mysterious Advent. Thus was He the "Desire of all nations;" but more especially the consolation of Israel; the holy seed of promise which Abraham rejoiced to behold from far; whose blessing was secured by immutable covenant in the posterity of Isaac and Jacob; whose life and death was prefigured in all the shadows of the ceremonial law; who was represented by Moses, by Joshua, and David, and other various types of that memorable economy; who was foretold with growing clearness in several distinct particulars by His royal ancestor, and Isaiah, and all the Prophets: expected accordingly by the faithful Israelites in uninterrupted succession, to the times of the great forerunner. And what then must we conceive of the object of preparations such as these? When that forerunner himself is declared to be on this account even "more than a Prophet," because he prepared the way before this his LORD,—himself "not that Light, but sent to bear witness of that Light,"—what then are we to think of Him, to whom all pre-

ceding revelations of God to men avowedly tend, in whom all the several lines of prophecy meet and centre? Where, indeed, can they adequately centre, but in the Incarnate SON of GOD? the conclusion which His inspired Apostle has given us in saying, that God, having in sundry manners spoken in times past to mankind by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His SON.

It is our privilege this day to mark in all its marvellous circumstances, the accomplishment of this long-sustained hope of humanity. We have heard how, when the Divine WORD was to unite Himself with our humanity, and be made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He was Himself to be kept clear of contact with corruption and sin: His humanity must be perfect, His flesh all holy, His soul uncontaminated by any association with our original taint; and since that subsists in all who are engendered in the natural way from sinful Adam, therefore HE could not be born after the manner of ordinary men. Therefore, of the stem of Jesse, from which He was to rise, a Virgin root was found to give birth to the Divine Redeemer; one whom the power of the Highest overshadowed and sanctified, that that Holy Thing which through the SPIRIT'S quickening virtue should proceed from her substance, might be wholly pure, and fit for the All-holy God to take into hypostatical union with Himself. Thus the Divine WORD was made flesh of her whom all generations therefore truly term

blessed; whose honour exceeds that which we know to belong to any creature whatever, that of having given human birth and being to the Eternal SON. We have heard also that this Blessed Virgin, though of the house of David originally, and though exalted by Divine grace to an honour above all the potentates of the world, was yet in lowly and poor condition when the LORD thus regarded her, as indeed ever since while on earth: so poor, that when the call of a yet undiscerned Providence brought her to Bethlehem, the town of David her ancestor, whence also, according to the Prophets, He also was to be born whose goings forth were from everlasting, the greater Shepherd and Ruler of Israel,—the only lodging procurable for her betrothed guardian and herself was the stable of an inn: a manger of beasts was the receptacle of the LORD of Glory at His first coming; and humble shepherds came thither to adore what the heads and rulers of Judah were not even privileged to know. But we have heard how the glorious hosts of heaven sang, though men were silent, the hymn that told the meaning of events so marvellous in the ears of mortals: even “Glory to God in the highest; on earth, peace; good-will towards men.”

With these admirable circumstances fresh in our minds, let us now at length turn to the description of Isaiah in my text. Let us see how all the characters he ascribes to the SON that was to be born, were displayed most eminently here.

“ His name shall be called **WONDERFUL**.” What, indeed, can be more wonderful than this Nativity? “ Great,” says S. Paul, “ is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” Wonderful is it that under any circumstances, or in any manner, God should reveal Himself to man. “ When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou hast ordained; **LORD**, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?” It is wonderful that God should visit man with the gift of inspiration, and make men His prophets and messengers; that His **SPIRIT** should converse by their mouths or pens in the ordinary modes of speech and writing, by which men communicate with each other. And greatly indeed is the wonder increased when we take into account the sinfulness of man: when in these intimations of His Divine will, we find the **ALMIGHTY** reasoning, arguing, expostulating; when the order of things among men is reversed, the offended Majesty turning suitor to the rebel and the criminal; when He even assumes the appearance of human sentiment or passion in these communications, describing Himself as wrathful against the determined sinner, or pitying the contrite penitent, or jealous over those whom He has appropriated as His own; when He repents Him of His past proceedings towards communities or individuals, or when He sympathizes with their sorrow and suffering. These expressions are indeed wonderful, though we know that they are

expressions only; figures and forms of speech by which the Eternal lowers Himself to our poor conception; and being Himself far above such human modes of feeling, thus deigns to represent His mode of acting to His creatures. But that these expressions should become in any way a reality, a literal fact,—that such a sympathy should be established in deed and truth between Almighty God and man,—who could have believed, or who, without Divine revelation, could have conceived the faintest suspicion of this? Yet this is no more than what this Incarnation and Nativity do actually present to us. No longer is that a mere figure of speech which Isaiah uttered with respect to the God of Israel; “In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them.” For here we behold the Divine WORD, the SON of GOD, the first offspring, the Eternal and consubstantial offspring, of the Eternal FATHER, making our condition His own; taking on Him not only our bodily nature with its capacities of physical pleasure or pain, but our mental and intellectual nature also; our soul with its capacities of hope and fear, of joy and of grief. To the knowledge which as God He possessed of our sorrows and infirmities, He adds what as God He could not have, the knowledge of personal experience. He not only perceives them as God, but He feels them as Man; He by the will of God was to taste of death, as the Apostle speaks; “to taste of death” and all its attendant evils “for every man.”

And is there not a yet further wonder involved in all this? Had CHRIST taken upon Him our nature, not only sinless, but free from pain and sorrow as it was when Adam was first created,—the condescension would still have been infinite: it would have been the Creator stooping to the form of a creature, and that a creature made lower than the angels; the adoring expressions of the eighth Psalm would even then be applicable to the LORD of all, thus submitting to the helplessness of infancy, and all the straitnesses and humiliations of the best possible created condition. But far more than this was the Incarnation of the SON of GOD. In submitting to become man,—to assume the reality of flesh, and the likeness, though not the reality, of *sinful* flesh, as the Apostle carefully words it,—He submitted even in His pure, sinless humanity, to endure all the physical evils which the first transgression has brought upon us. He who was to be the restorer of our humanity to more than its original blessedness, descended far lower than this for its recovery. Though the first Adam was at his best estate of the earth, earthy, while He, the second Adam, was the LORD from heaven; yet, He made Himself in humanity below the first condition of Adam for our sake. He was made in the form of a servant, that we might be finally freed from servitude; He was poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich; He was despised, that we might be raised from shame to glory; and died, that we might live for ever. It is little

difference, indeed, in itself considered, if the Creator is to descend to the form of a creature, whether it be a high or a low form of humanity, such as we esteem high or low: yet must it be accounted a difference, and a considerable one, that the Almighty, in assuming a created nature, should submit further to be overlooked by His own creatures; and not only overlooked, but despised; not only despised, but treated with contumely and insult and wrong. Yet, even this in its worst form was the lot of the Incarnate SON of GOD: the sordid manger was but the suitable prelude of the ignominious cross. And yet more wonderful, if that were possible, than that GOD should endure all this despite at His creatures' hand, is the SPIRIT's solution of the mystery, His precise and full enunciation of the reason why this capacity of enduring evil was assumed by the SON of GOD. The reason is thus stated in the words of the inspired Apostle: "It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. *Therefore*, both He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; nor is He ashamed to call them brethren. Nay, in all things, it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." And again, "we have not a High Priest

which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Let us but briefly follow the concluding characters; "He is COUNSELLOR," says the Prophet. "*He is made* unto us," says the Apostle, "wisdom;" being Himself the uncreated Light and Wisdom of God, He is made so to us, even here, by the spectacle which this Incarnation exhibits to us. Even here, He teaches how little in God's sight are those distinctions of one man from another, on which the distempered imagination is apt to place its happiness; that poverty and contempt, however grievous in themselves, are not the greatest of evils, since the SON of God in taking upon Him our nature, chose willingly to assume them; that sin, from which He came to free us, sin which cost this sacrifice to effect our redemption, is in truth the greatest of evils; and that sin must be accordingly the chief object of our dread, if JESUS is to be really our Saviour. This Wonderful Counsellor instructs at the same time in those deep mysteries of our condition which the wisest philosophers in their subtlest speculations on morals could never penetrate; they could never reconcile their internal consciousness of the dignity of human nature with what experience tells of its corruption; nor point out, amidst the contradictory appearances of nature on the subject, how man once fallen from original rectitude, and the path which natural religion and conscience assigns to him, could

ascend again to converse with his Maker. It required more than their highest and truest ethics could furnish, to remove that barrier of uncertain dread with which men, conscious of sin, even the best of natural men, are instinctively affected at the thought of the Majesty of Heaven : to remove the impression that this Divine nature must be inaccessible to ours, that our prayers could never reach or affect it in any wise. But this infinity of condescension relieves our dismal uncertainty : this inspires confidence in approaching the throne of Heaven, which the best of the holy men under the preparatory dispensations possessed not in the same degree with those who have it explicitly : here first is GOD manifested in the Christian sense as "OUR FATHER," when we see His only-begotten SON thus clothed in our humanity, and submitting to the worst of evils that our sin had caused, that He might redeem us from sin. Nor is there any one path of life, in which His example, from the manger downwards, does not counsel and instruct us ; alleviating the calamities of life, and instructing in its duties, and promoting throughout that love of God, and that poverty of spirit with regard to earthly advantages, which all—the rich and the poor alike—must possess, if they would enter into the kingdom of heaven.

But He is further the Mighty GOD, the Everlasting Father, or as the words may be more literally rendered, the Father of the Age ; the Father, in other words, of that final dispensation which

reaches from His resurrection from death even to the end of the world. That Psalm before-cited from this morning's service, which describes Him as God seated on His throne for ever and ever, and at the same time as Man exalted above His fellows for His obedience,—proceeds to tell how that most mighty and victorious Prince should espouse to Himself a bride all-glorious and immaculate, who should worship Him as her LORD GOD; how heathen nations should attend with tributes of honour at the nuptials; and how thus He should raise up of her a progeny that should give princes to all lands, and cause all generations to unite in perpetual praise of their immortal Sovereign. And thus is the same most Mighty God addressed in the beginning of this chapter of Isaiah, as increasing and amplifying the family of God: “multiplying the nation, and * to it increasing joy”: removing the dimness of vexation which in the Prophet's day overcast the people of GOD from their northern frontier: causing that even there, in the tract beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles, where was the first dismemberment and diminution of Israel, when the two great tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali were carried away by the Assyrian conqueror Tiglath-pileser; even thence, from that since unhonoured region (as S. Matthew long after applied the prophecy), should the nations that walked in darkness, behold a great Light arising; through that Light first issuing from

* 17 in Isa. ix. 3.

Galilee should the people of God be enlarged to happiness and victory: thence amidst the joys of bloodless conquest, without noise and tumult, but as with burning and fuel of fire, they should extend their borders into the territories of the idolater and oppressor. Thus should that seed in whom all the families of the earth were blessed, accomplish in due time the first promise to Abraham, and give him by CHRIST'S spouse, the Church, a progeny as the stars of heaven in number, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable. It is thus that CHRIST, who is the Mighty God, and conqueror of enemies to His obedience, is also the Everlasting Father, the Father of an age or generation which has no end of days, begotten of incorruptible seed in the baptismal waters, the sons and heirs of immortality.

And He is lastly, the Prince of Peace; He on whose shoulders the government shall rest,—the rule of His Church, and of the world, even to the end of time. Little, indeed, do we seem to see of the imperial character in the inn and stable of Bethlehem: yet here were the good shepherds told to look for the Anointed King, and heir of David's throne: hence in due time proceeded the power which realized, though in a new and strange manner, the declaration to the Virgin Mother, that He should inherit His father's throne, and rule over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom should be no end. From this inn and stable at Bethlehem

did spring a dominion that asserted its supremacy over all others in the earth, that overturned all the idolatries then existing in the world; which won at length the kings and princes of this world to bow themselves before the LORD who was born in this humble tenement, and instead of persecuting, as before, to proclaim and establish His religion in the civil world. For from this manger proceeded in orderly succession and development, the Divine power which alone worked this astonishing revolution; hence, that most holy life which both illuminated and condemned the world; hence, the death that overcame death, and the resurrection that opened to believers the gate of everlasting life: hence, the grace by which the virtue of CHRIST'S Incarnation works still in the regenerate and living members of His mystical body; hence, that kingdom which is not of the world, whose arms and instruments of aggression, as the Prophet here speaks, are not those that strike with confused noise and garments rolled in blood; but with the fire of the Spirit, the Spirit of faith, and patience, of zeal, and fervent charity: a kingdom which, as the Psalmist declares, is an everlasting kingdom, and a dominion enduring throughout all generations; an empire, which shall never cease to extend itself by the Church on earth, until peace on earth, the peace sung by Angels at the Nativity, shall be its universal consequence. For even now, when, as the Apostle speaks, we see not all things yet made sub-

ject to Him, and the fierce strife between good and evil is raging everywhere ; yet peace, the legacy bequeathed by CHRIST to His disciples universally, is the internal characteristic of those who are truly His. Peace with God, reconciled through the gift and sacrifice of His SON : peace with men, as far as love to all men for God's sake can ensure it in a stormy world : peace within, from the torment of an accusing conscience, from distempered passions, and inordinate desires, which ignorant of their proper good, rove restlessly for their gratification, no less disgusted by full possession, than agitated and vexed by disappointment. In the following of CHRIST alone is the cure for these sore evils of humanity ; hence, that rest to the soul which He ensures to all that come to Him ; and all the contentments which arise from affections well regulated, and hopes well bestowed ; a pious resignation to the Divine Will, ensuring patience and tranquillity of spirit, a communion by one SPIRIT with the FATHER and His SON JESUS CHRIST, and the whole company of faithful believers in Him. This peace of God which passeth all understanding, we then particularly seek to strengthen and perpetuate in ourselves, when in this holy festival, we partake of the sacred mysteries of His body and blood ; who as on this day, assumed both these for our salvation.

Well then has the Church commenced her most Sacred Post-Communion Hymn, in which her thanks for the mysteries of redemption are poured forth, by the song of the Angels at this Nativity :

“ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.” For the germ of the highest acts and sufferings of the LORD, by which our redemption was accomplished, is in the event we now commemorate: this by certifying the one all-comprising fact of the Incarnation, assures the faithful soul of the fulfilment, in due time, of all that it was to effect for man. If then the highest, the most astonishing pledge of Divine goodness, calls for admiration and praise from us; if the highest dignity that could be conferred on our nature by the Eternal One, be a happy subject for thankful meditation; if love that invites our grateful love in return, and goodness that constrains to obedient imitation, be a happy exchange for the publication of mere commandment, without a hope of renewal or of forgiveness; if it be a blessed privilege to call God Our Father, our Father in and through His only begotten Son, who becoming our brother as Son of man, has made an indissoluble link between the Deity and our feeble humanity; if it be strengthening in duty, and consolatory in trouble, to be assured that we have one on high as our Advocate as well as our LORD, who not only knows, but can feel for, our human infirmities, and human trials; if His satisfaction for sin be precious to us, His all-sufficient grace our continual support; then is that day which began to announce these inestimable benefits, which gave us the actual Saviour that was to accomplish them, the brightest that ever dawned upon a world of sin and

sorrow. Our germinal Easter and Pentecost is here : here, though less deep in tone, less triumphant in character than at Easter, our jubilation is more lightsome and more transporting than at any other season. Our Advent preparation will not suffer the Creator, the Sovereign LORD and Judge, to be absent from our minds : but let our thoughts now dwell on Him who, when He took man's nature for our redemption, abhorred not the Virgin's womb ; who disdained not to be as the very lowest and meanest among us, that He might raise us to heaven ; who was born without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin ; whose birth should give us heavenly birth, and deaden and destroy within us every seed of pride or bitterness. To Him, therefore, the Virgin-born, who, with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, is One God for evermore, be ascribed by us, as by Angels and Archangels, all honour and glory, adoration and praise, for evermore. Amen.

NOTES.

NOTE A. (p. 55.)

I WOULD be gladly content with this tacit reference to the most remarkable author of a celebrated *dictum* : for whom, as an intrepid reformer of abuses, I am not without admiration ; though it is long since I have been able to regard him in the character for which his worshippers claim homage, as a reviver of the long buried Gospel, as a safe dogmatic teacher, or an exhibitor in his own person of the higher sanctities of CHRIST's religion. Finding however, from a recent and somewhat surprising experience, that this is not unlikely to be considered by those worshippers as an instance of *snarling at Luther* ; finding myself also involved in somewhat more than the discredit of that ugly canine proceeding, in some pages of very serious rebuke in Note W. to Archdeacon Hare's Sermons on the Mission of the Comforter ; I take the opportunity of my first appearance in print after the publication of those Sermons, as a preacher before the same University, to bestow some notice on what I am advised not to leave wholly unanswered.

I have in the first place to inform Archdeacon Hare that my distaste for Luther as a theological teacher, does not proceed from the cause to which he conjecturally assigns it : viz. a disposition to visit on him as the supposed father the demerits of some subsequent speculators of his nation ; notwithstanding their occasional citation of him in aid of their own mode of sinking the objective in the subjective in religion. My distaste preceded, by a considerable interval, my acquaintance, whatever it may have been, with the late pantheistic mythicizers of Christianity : and proceeded on totally different grounds from my aversion to *their* line of speculation. It was founded solely on the reading of the Reformer's own work, the Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. Had I not been most fully persuaded by somewhat

more than insulated passages of that work, that the extract from the letter to Melancthon contained nothing beyond what the writer had repeatedly and deliberately asserted concerning the grace of the Gospel, I should not have admitted so startling a passage without suspicion, even from such an adversary as Moehler. I certainly had not read it in its original connexion: but neither when it first met my eyes long ago, nor when I found it in the last-mentioned able and candid writer, from whom I copied it into my note on the Lent Sermons of 1844, did I see the least reason to question its genuineness. And if I had then felt any doubt, Archdeacon Hare's work would now have removed it. If under these circumstances I sinned, as he is pleased to allege, in copying and noticing the sentence as I did, I will now make the fullest expiation in my power: that is, by producing the place with its whole context, before and after, and with Archdeacon Hare's exculpatory comment in an opposite column. The paraphrase on the words I had before quoted, and on the two sentences that follow, is Mr. Hare's own, and in his own words, with the single exception of putting into plain English those clauses which he, from an evident apprehension of their naked deformity, has preferred to retain in the original Latin of the admired Reformer. For the no less startling passages that precede, I have condensed as well as I could what the Archdeacon has written at great length from p. 786 to p. 793. I have studied to omit no consideration to which he attaches importance; and from the same careful desire not to misrepresent him in any wise, I have distinguished his explanatory matter from the proper *metaphrasis* of his original, (of which only those last three sentences are given in his words,) by printing the latter in Italics.

Luther.

Paraphrase after the mind of Archdeacon Hare, (vol. ii. p. 788—799.)

Writing, as I do, not to an adulterous Pope, or a murderous inquisitor, or any other monster of ini-

Luther.

Si gratiæ prædicator es, gratiam non fictam sed veram prædica. Si vera gratia est, verum non fictum peccatum ferto. Deus non facit salvos fecte peccatores. Esto peccator, et pecca fortiter; sed fortius fide et gaude in Christo, qui victor est peccati, mortis et mundi. Peccandum est, quamdiu sic sumus. Vita hæc non est habitatio justitiæ: *expectamus*, ait Petrus, *cælos novos et terram novam in quibus*

quity, but to the virtuous Philip Melancthon, from my friendly confinement in the Wartburg, this June 29, A. D. 1521, calmly desiring to set right my over-scrupulous friend, who fears it is a sin to communicate only in one kind,—I therefore, after speaking to that question, write thus. *If thou art a preacher of grace*, grace being meant for sinners, why deal with such artificial peccadilloes, such make-believe sins as this about which thou wouldst consult me, instead of the real downright awful sins, such as every awakened man knows to cleave to him? As a preacher of grace, *preach a real not a sham grace: and if grace is real, bear about thee not a sham but a real sin*. Depend upon it that *God saves not sham sinners*. Out with thy pitiful scruples, therefore, about the sacrament. *Be a sinner and sin stoutly*; that is to say, confess thyself a sinner, not in such matters as these, but real sins, and be of a good heart notwithstanding thy sin: *trust but the more strongly and rejoice in Christ, who is the conqueror of sin, death, and the world. Here we must sin as long as we remain*; there is no help for it. *It is not in this life, but hereafter, that the Apostle bids us look for the new heavens and the new earth in*

Luther.

justitia habitat. Sufficit quod agnoscimus per divitias gloriæ Dei Agnum qui tollit peccata mundi; ab hoc non avellet nos peccatum, etiamsi millies millies uno die fornicemur aut occidamus. Putas tam parvum pretium, aut redemptionem pro peccatis nostris factam in tanto ac tali Agno? Ora fortiter: es enim fortissimus peccator.

which righteousness dwells. (Here) it is enough that, through the riches of the glory of God, we have known the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. From Him sin shall not separate us, though we commit whoredom or murder a thousand thousand times in one day. Thinkest thou that the price and redemption offered for our sins by this Divine Lamb is so small that it cannot avail to cover your sham sins? Pray boldly and instantly: for thou art a very great sinner.

As I do not rest my defence on any dispute of the correctness of this account of Luther's meaning, I forbear to criticize the relevancy of the argument to the alleged purpose of meeting Melancthon's scruple, supposing this to be as futile as the master or his commentator would make it: nor will I do more than just mention the injustice done by Archdeacon Hare to the forcible rhetoric of his hero, in limiting to his "*ficta peccata*" or sham sins, the application, in the last sentence but one, of what he had argued to belong not at all to them, but to real sins*. Let this attempted mitigation pass: let the far more serious softening of the *PECCA FORTITER* pass also: I were myself willing, as a more favourable supposition for Luther, that the passage were taken as *meant* to assure consciences that feel the burden of real and flagrant sins, not to despair of CHRIST's merits as sufficient to cover them all. Making every allowance in my power for the *intention*,—wishing also to admit such excuses as ad-

* The assertion, in the supposed doubter's case, of the sufficiency of CHRIST's Sacrifice to cover not *ficta peccata*, but real sins, is required to exhibit the true force of the following exhortation to him; where, as if it were a corollary to that great truth, the palmary Lutheranic dogma is implied; viz. that the *fortissimum peccatum*, the damning sin, is questioning the actual application of the great Sacrifice to our sins, whatever they may be.

versaries (like Moehler), as well as advocates (like Coleridge), suggest for the excitement under which the reformer wrote, but which excuses Archdeacon Hare dismisses with disdain,—being, moreover, most fully convinced, as I beg to assure him, that Luther did not mean to prompt his sober friend what to *do*, but rather what to *teach*, in respect of fornication and homicide,—still I must repeat, and most deliberately, and in the fear of God, repeat, that which he calls my sin. I must denounce this passage, however softened, as a most flagrant and revolting outrage on the infinite grace which it professes to magnify. The repugnance, the utter contrariety of its whole tone and spirit throughout, to that in which Holy Scripture meets the selfsame topics (for which I need point no more than to the places quoted by Luther himself in 2 Peter iii. ; Romans vii. ; and 1 John ii.) must be, I am persuaded, apparent to the veriest babe in CHRIST who compares them ; and certainly no less so to every well exercised Christian, whom a determinate prepossession for the author as a reformer, or as a hero, has not made willing to disguise the thorough contrariety from himself. Whether those to whose spiritual judgment I appeal may seem in my censor's eyes, as pygmies watching the motions of a Titan, (p. 797), or mayhap like certain Londoners, over whom Mont Blanc might be seen shaking off an avalanche or two in Regent's Park, (ibid.!), is of very little moment indeed. These Carlylianisms will be rated at their just worth by such as chance to remember what a greater than Luther has said of those who teach others to think complacently of violating the least of God's commandments. The laws of CHRIST and of His Church, know as little of this kind of acceptance of persons, as they do of any other.

But Archdeacon Hare's notice of the precept, "Sin stoutly," is not limited to this mitigatory paraphrase : he has given us a more tangible measure of his meaning, and of the moral bearing of the exhortation, when he points to a subsequent passage in the history of the two Reformers, as showing "how thoroughly Luther understood his (friend's) character, when he said to him years before, *pecca fortiter*." (p. 854.) The passage is that most discreditable one in their history, the accordance of a dispensation of bigamy,

intended to be secret, to their powerful partisan, Philip Landgrave of Hesse: and the praiseworthy observance of that notable precept *pecca fortiter*, according to this vindicator's notion of it, was the bearing up with undaunted effrontery against the disgrace which the discovery of that transaction brought on their cause: the violation was, to sink abashed under the exposure!—I need not say that the former of these courses was Luther's, the latter Melancthon's: and while no words can adequately express my disagreement with Archdeacon Hare respecting the former's deportment under these circumstances, I sincerely wish that our difference were as complete respecting the other: that I could really and honestly dissent from his expressed contempt of Melancthon's pusillanimity on the same occasion. But I cannot. His total prostration, his grief even to death, his forgetting to eat his bread, and the other particulars so graphically told by himself or others concerning him (pp. 853, 5), would indeed be respectable, most truly respectable, in my eyes, (as in all that look on the *Pecca-fortiter*-principle with abhorrence,) were they indicative of genuine Christian penitence: i. e. if the human disgrace he so keenly felt, were accepted for what it really was, an image and reflexion of a judgment and censure far more to be dreaded than that of any mortal. But this feeling, the *TIBI SOLI peccavi*, as suitable to the Gospel as to the old dispensation, was not suggested to the author of the *Loci Communes* by his views of the Law in relation to the believer's conscience, on an occasion that thus signally called for it. And sympathy is turned to disapproval, and disapproval to contempt, when the extremity of vivid perception of the lower evil is found unaccompanied with the least sense of the higher. The total absence of this is evinced by a most unequivocal mark, his expressed admiration of his partner in disgrace; who, notwithstanding his own deep annoyance at the exposure, begged his friend to think nothing of it,—and *non solum consolando, sed sæpe duriter objurgando*, employed for his re-assurance the considerations proper for those only who suffer for righteousness' sake.

Now it is this last demeanour,—how truly termed *fortiter peccare* we learn from Archdeacon Hare himself,—that he has

selected for especial impassioned eulogy!—eulogy bestowed not merely on its boldness or its human amiableness, (p. 855,) which I should not care to question, but on its asserted Christian piety and heroism! (pp. 853, 859.) “However severely we may blame Luther,” he tells us, for the previous dispensation,—or rather, for I must quote Mr. Hare’s own words, “for his allowing himself to be influenced in such a matter by *misericordia* and *humanissima facilitas* (!)—still, when the secret is disclosed,* *when the scandal gets wind, how does the heroic grandeur of his character, the might of his invincible faith rise out of the trial! The rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon his house: but it stood fast, because it was founded upon a Rock. And so, God willing, it shall still, in despite of all its blustering revilers and undermining detractors.*” *Εὐφρημα φώνει!* If Archdeacon Hare’s admiration were not as blind as it is vehement, we might be spared the pain that the perusal of these unhappy words has caused. Painful it is to see the picture which the Incarnate Lord drew of the man that heareth His sayings AND DOETH THEM, transferred by an official of His Church to the man that faces with brazen front the scandal of an indefensible wrong: the floods, winds, and waves being here no other than the storms of just reproach stirred up by the allowed breach of one of the weightiest of that Lord’s sayings or precepts to mankind; one in which He most solemnly recalled to the purity of its first institution, (not barely from corrupt traditions, but from licences that for men’s hardness of heart were divinely admitted before,) the great link of human society; annexing to it fresh sanctions, and sacramental seals of holiness and inviolability.

I say an *indefensible* wrong: for it is a task beyond the Philo-Lutherism even of Archdeacon Hare, to attempt more than the palliation of this outrage on the received law of Christendom. More indeed could not be attempted with a transaction so obviously unable to bear the light as this, on the showing of all concerned in it, as well after the scandal as before; and that the Archdeacon finds it no easy task, is sufficiently evinced by the

* The Italics from this point are mine, not Archdeacon Hare’s.

manner in which something like an appeal *ad misericordiam*, and complaint of the severity of censors, is interspersed* with wrathful invective against them, and attempts, equally unfounded and irrelevant, at recrimination. If the case were such as he earnestly believes and labours to represent it, both with respect to the dispensation and the studied concealment; i.e. if Luther and his companions had honestly persuaded themselves that there is no absolute prohibition of polygamy in the New Testament, that there were cases in which it might be allowed, and that the instance of their powerful partisan was one of them; and if moreover the motive for requiring secrecy from the indulged Prince, were simply and solely the fear lest it might be drawn into a precedent in cases where the same justificatory circumstances did not exist; what then, I ask, ought to have been—what would have been—the conduct of men thus sincerely persuaded, when their secret was violated, “when the scandal got wind,” the Landgrave being but too pleased to produce for his monstrous licence the authority of a conclave of grave divines? Did not a far higher duty than that of self-vindication then imperatively require of them that these justificatory circumstances should be as distinctly proclaimed to the world, as they had been whispered in the ear before; the circumstances, without the knowledge of which souls might be entangled by their authority, in fearful and enormous sin? But instead of this, what do we perceive? As strong a determination to conceal all that could yet be concealed, as existed before the scandal had yet arisen, the avoidance of which was the sole pretext for concealment: this determination on the part of the unabashed Luther being accompanied with a mysterious intimation, that the publication of the reasons which in-

* I allude particularly to what is said severally in p. 862 and p. 860. Whatever guilt the profligacy of the court of Louis XIV. may have occasioned to those who did not all in their power to rebuke and discountenance it, such guilt has no relation to that which is here charged against Luther, the direct sanction of a sinful act as lawful. Were even the utmost criminality of such connivance actually proved against Bossuet, (which it cannot be,) it would scarcely be decorous or just to compare him to a *preacher come out of Sodom to rail at Abraham for taking Hagar to his bed!!*

duced him to comply with the Landgrave, " would bring him (the Landgrave) much greater shame, and make the scandal far worse." How this could be without aggravating at the same time, and proportionally, the shame of those who gave the licence thus disgracefully sought, the Christian world is unable to understand or conceive. What else can be concluded respecting persons who, whether recriminating or consoling, whether cowering under the disgrace or coolly confronting it, equally evince the grounds of their judgment to be unfit for the light of day; and in whose view of their own miserable case, we seem to see the Spartan principle brought into Christian ethics, that the matter of reproach lies not in the thing detected, but in the detection?*

It is by no means essential to our thorough condemnation of this whole proceeding, that we should conceive corrupt or sordid inducements,—such, I mean, as are commonly termed corrupt or sordid,—to have been before the minds of the Reformers in granting this indulgence: as, that they were bribed by an offer of sharing the monastic spoils that formed so tempting a prize to their influential lay adherents. Let us concede to the admirers that the supposition is improbable, incredible if they will, nay

* Witness these words of Luther, (Hare, p. 856,) " I have the advantage that your Grace and all the devils themselves, must testify and confess, that *it is a secret counsel*: next, that *I entreated with all earnestness that it might not be published*; thirdly, that if it came to the worst, yet I am sure that *it is not published through me*. So long as I have these three arguments, I would not advise the devil himself to set my pen stirring." If it were possible to include the thing here permitted, as Archdeacon Hare strives to do, among those of which the criminality arises out of the public scandal alone, and from the mass of mankind not discerning the reasons that justify it,—surely then the withholding of the reasons *after the fact of the licence was known*, must become the more inexcusable on that account. But in truth, to bring it under that description is impossible. It is strange, very strange, that the Archdeacon should represent as "a cognate matter" to this bigamy, the licence, unseemly as it is, to which the quotation from Taylor, in the same page, refers: but to adduce, as in any respect parallel to it, the acts which lawful marriage sanctifies, as he does in the next sentence, is scarcely tolerable.

monstrous to imagine : that it may even bear a certain similitude to the fancy of a poor gentleman, who should “ think of *bribing the sun to shine to-morrow by promising him a good breakfast.*” (p. 863 !) In sober seriousness, I do not think Luther or Melancthon likely to be moved by *this* kind of temptation. It is another question whether that which does indeed appear in the business, and is allowed by the vindicator, (p. 863, 4,) viz. the promised devotion of a large portion of the ecclesiastical plunder to such purposes of religious utility as they would approve, might not supply to them a more efficacious, and still very sinful, inducement ; i.e. the inducement to give judgment in favour of the offerer, in order that this esteemed good might come of it. But our condemnation does not rest on this : it needs no other support than the reasons stated by themselves in the pitiable document produced by Archdeacon Hare, (p. 830—835,) and the arguments which he himself does not blush to urge in their favour. The Lutheran assumption that “ the Gospel does not change the rule of outward life,”—that “ marriage does not pertain to the Church, but is out of it, a temporal worldly thing,” the questions respecting which belong to the civil magistrate only,—that after what CHRIST our LORD (who disclaimed all civil adjudications,) has authoritatively pronounced on this matter, we are yet left to look for practical Christian guidance, *especially where princes are concerned*, to the Old Testament examples of uncensured polygamy in patriarchs and kings, (p. 849, 850, and 834, 5,)—these reasons, employed by the Landgrave’s advisers, as by Melancthon to the same effect to our libidinous tyrant Henry VIII., are of themselves fatal to the theological, if not the moral eminence claimed for such directors of royal conscience as these. But even those unchristian positions sink into insignificance, compared with the considerations, subversive even of ordinary morality, which are employed in the miserable case now before us. When a prince who has taken a disgust at his lawful wife, and has lived for some time in adulterous intercourse with another, propounds to his spiritual counsellors as a “ long standing trouble of his conscience,” a practice from which he neither feels nor professes any

wish to free himself,* is it not a gross abuse of terms, an outrage on religion and common sense, to call giving this man a licence for what he desires by the name of *relieving a TENDER conscience*? And is it not the very *acme* of outrage, when this same shameful *relief* is represented as an instance "of *heroic faith and love, which would never shrink from any shame to be incurred by endeavouring to relieve the conscience of a brother*"? So Archdeacon Hare actually writes in p. 850, forgetting his character of an excusing friend in the more congenial one of a rapturous encomiast! But when, resuming the more moderate character, he says in mitigation of Luther's error, that it "after all was an error on the right side, *its purpose being to substitute a hallowed union for unhallowed licence,*" (p. 858), I must protest with all earnestness, in the name of Christian truth and righteousness, against the con-

* This is evident on the face of the whole proceeding: but we may cite especially those characteristic words of the dispensing document, where having finished their exhortations to live correctly, they anticipate the Prince's certain refusal by a licence in these terms: "But if your Grace do not quit your unchaste life, *for that you wrote that this is not possible*, we would rather that your Grace stood in better case before God, and lived with a good conscience, for your Grace's happiness, and the good of your country and people. If however, your Grace should at length resolve to take another wife, we think that this should be kept secret, as was said above of the dispensation, namely, that your Grace and the lady, with some confidential persons, should know your Grace's mind and conscience through confession. From this no particular rumour or scandal could arise; for it is not unusual for princes to have concubines," &c. &c. (p. 834.)

Is it not strange that with the passage marked in Italics, and others to the same effect, before him, Archdeacon Hare should have persuaded himself, (p. 852) that "the sole ground of the application was the Landgrave's *earnest desire to relinquish his sinful practices*;" still more that he should coolly make the assumed certainty of this palpable untruth a reason for interpreting in a non-natural sense all the passages, "if they are genuine," in the Landgrave's own letter which imply, as it is allowed they apparently do, a determination to continue his adultery? For an *earnest desire to relinquish*, Archdeacon Hare should have said "an earnest desire to have his cherished practice sanctioned, and declared not sinful;" and perhaps this is the Lutheranic interpretation of the words: but what then becomes of the conclusion drawn from them?

fusion of ideas that dictates such an evasion of reproof as this. It may be true with respect to the individual offender, that his sin, subjectively considered, is lessened, if he accepts *bona fide* as a lawful union, what was before in his eyes, as well as in the reality, mere undoubted adultery: but even this is subject to the serious condition, that his inclination has not *produced* this erroneous impression of lawfulness in the act; for if so, the guilt is not extenuated, but rather aggravated thereby. But what is this personal consideration, most favourably viewed, to the act of those who adapt the rule of right to meet the wishes of the party? Is it an error "on the right side," to attempt the annihilation of sin, by relaxing the salutary strictness that prohibits and condemns sin? We need not consult the *Lettres Provinciales* for a censure of such methods: the judgment of every unbiassed Christian mind supplies it sufficiently. Better that a hundred such men as the Landgrave of Hesse were left to their undisguised adultery, and the most presumptuous violations of conscience, than that the law of God, which keeps us in purity and peace, were bent in a single tittle to make them easy and comfortable in their wickedness. A man has studied to little purpose the example of Prophets and Confessors, and the illustration of Divine truth even in those whose guilt it convicts and aggravates, as repeatedly declared in Holy Scripture,—who can hesitate in his judgment of this alternative.

I trust therefore that I have sufficiently vindicated the condemnation I once expressed, and now more strongly repeat, of a maxim equally shocking in its statement and its exemplification; the maxim that the utmost degree of contemplated sin need not abate our confidence in the actual impetration of CHAIR'S salvation by ourselves,—that, in place of the "grievous remembrance," and the "intolerable burden," we should adopt that stoutness of feeling under its pressure and its consequences, of which the horrible *Pecca fortiter* is the chosen preceptive expression. And I should not have dwelt so long as I have done on this historical illustration of the precept, though it is one pointed out by my censurer himself, were I not persuaded that the dog-

matic character of Lutheranism is far more concerned than Arch-deacon Hare is willing to admit, in that laxity of view concerning marriage, which was thus disgracefully exemplified in the first promulgators. At the hazard of no small portion of the anger which he has poured forth so unsparingly on Sir W. Hamilton and others, I must express my conviction that the denial of all legislative character to the Gospel as such,—the view of the righteousness we apprehend by faith as standing quite apart from all preceptive considerations of that nature,—the non-recognition of any higher character in these laws than what belongs to the most variable elements of civil or political life,—the reference of them, as far as they are religious, to the Old Testament rather than to the New, even where the redintegration of them in the latter is most manifest,—and the assertion, in despite of this, that what “is permitted concerning marriage in the law of Moses, is not forbidden in the Gospel,”*—all these positions of Luther’s theology, no less than the peculiar and novel sense there attached to the office of *relieving troubled consciences*, receive no more than their just and natural development in this polygamical licence to the German Prince : a licence to which, (whatever may be insinuated or pretended,) the dispensations of the vilified Schoolmen and Canonists afford no parallel. The self-same principle of seeking the Divine law in its perfection in the Mosaic ordinances,—and treating the developments of the law of CHRIST in His Church as so many usurpations on the Law and misrepresentations of the Gospel,—was pressed by an English writer of the last century to a point very little in advance of that which Luther and his companions had reached from the first ; viz. that there is no absolute prohibition of polygamy to Christians ; that by virtue of its express sanction in Deuteronomy, it may and ought to be allowed as a useful and hallowed remedy for more serious evils ; though on account of the domestic disagreements it engenders, it must

* The words of the dispensation to the Landgrave of Hesse : answering to those of Luther on Henry’s divorce of Catharine : “ *Antequam tale repudium probarem, potius Regi permitterem alteram Regnam quoque ducere, et exemplo Patrum et Regum duas simul uxores seu reginas habere.*”

not be thought as eligible as monogamy. Happily the instinctive sense of the Christian world on this point was too strong for Martin Madan as for Martin Luther : the evangelical (or, as they might be much more truly termed, the Lutheranic) clergy of the day, resisted the arguments which their friend and brother urged to them especially with considerable address and force, from their usual armoury,* and, greatly to their credit, rejected the licentious theory with abhorrence. But short of this extreme point, minor indications are not wanting of the course and tendency of principles in this respect. They may be seen by such as will observe by whom, and by what description of arguments, that degree of salutary strictness of Christian law in marriage is now opposed and sought to be removed, in which our country is distinguished from others in which Lutheran principles have had fuller scope and ascendancy. They may be seen yet more by such as have marked the licence in these respects, that missionaries imbued with the Lutheran views of the Gospel are disposed to allow to recent proselytes from heathenism.

But it is now time to return finally to the general subject, and to the censure, so assailed by Archdeacon Hare, which I had joined Chillingworth in passing on the antinomianism of the object of his unbounded admiration,—as evinced in a passage equally untrue in its dogmatic statement, and awful in its practical bearing. The charge of ignorance of the Gospel is often made against those who scruple statements resembling or ap-

* This work, which reached a second edition in 1789, though now happily only remarkable as a monument of that bygone period, is entitled "*Thelyphthora, or a Treatise on Female Ruin, in its Causes, Consequences, Prevention and Remedy, considered on the basis of the Divine Law*, under the following heads, Marriage, Whoredom and Fornication, Adultery, Polygamy, Divorce, &c., &c." 3 vols., 8vo.

The author is the composer, to Watts's words, of the hymn, *Before Jehovah's awful throne*, and some other similar pieces ; still in high favour with thousands to whom the unearthly strains of genuine Church music are insipid and distasteful : to whom also, we rejoice to add, the labours of the admired composer in the field of Christian ethics and biblical criticism, are happily unknown.

proaching to this; nor should I wonder to see it urged here by one who taxes the above mentioned writer with Arminian error, and with want of profundity in religion, for representing the Gospel as a covenant implying conditions on man's part,—who considers that notion as “sadly obscuring the perception of the freedom of the Gospel,” (p. 456,)—and who (p. 801,) argues that because the blessed promise to the faithful is that sin shall not have dominion over them, because they are not under the law but under grace, *therefore* it is safe and right to lay it down as dogmatic truth, that if we sin ever so wilfully after receiving justifying grace, we shall (all apparent Apostolical* declarations notwithstanding,) be saved not the less through Him whom our sins crucify afresh, if only we confidently trust that He will thus save us. For this, and no less than this, is the assertion of the words which Chillingworth is taxed with want of depth for reprobating and solidly confuting: *homo Christianus sive baptizatus . . . non potest, ETIAM VOLENS, perdere suam salutem QUANTISCUNQUE PECCATIS, nisi nolit credere.* Now to all pretences of superior light and profundity, that may come in aid of such statements,—and to all the unscrupulous denunciation of those who reprove them, as if they were for purchasing heaven by paltry works, and hostile to the joy that is there for the recovery of the penitent, (p. 785, 6, &c. &c.)—there is a sufficient, and I hope intelligible, answer. There are those who believe with no less force and earnestness than Luther himself, that their sole resource is in a mercy which meets them as sinners,—which bears

* The repeated contradiction that the inspired Epistle to the Hebrews gives to these Lutheran statements is too evident for any clear understanding to evade. Was it the perceived contrariety to what he would identify with the doctrine of S. Paul, (of him who is so injuriously termed *Lutherus ante Lutherum*,) that caused a late powerful but unsound thinker to spy Gnosticism (!) in that Epistle? While appending this note of unfeigned wonder, I do not forget that one of my delinquencies, in Archdeacon Hare's eyes, is that I thus expressed admiration at the somewhat less monstrous Lutheran hypothesis respecting that divine Epistle, that would ascribe it to S. Paul's rival teacher at Corinth. (Hare, p. 800.)

with their sins,—which can convert and restore them after repeated and aggravated sins; who yet see closely conjoined with “the strong declaration in S. John’s first Epistle i. 8, 10,” which they are so injuriously suspected of overlooking, its purpose no less strongly expressed, **THAT YE SIN NOT**; the declaration equally strong, **that WHOSOEVER ABIDETH IN HIM, SINNETH NOT**; nay, that he **CAN-NOT SIN, BECAUSE HE IS BORN OF GOD**; moreover that **THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH**. There are those to whom these assertions of the contrariety to sin of the heavenly nature we have received, while they minister the only adequate grounds of penitence and contrition, furnish also the strongest motive for adherence to their only Saviour from sin, **GOD INCARNATE**: to whom consequently every view of the Gospel that fails to urge these considerations is an object of suspicion; every one that slights them, of dislike; but every one that contradicts them, (as do these assertions of Luther in set terms,) of deprecation and abhorrence.

Without a new light, very different from that of the Scriptures, it could never be thought a presumption in favour of a scheme of doctrine, that it should be charged by its enemies with Manichæism, rather than with the opposite error. Assuredly the only conviction of sinfulness that Christianity recognizes as salutary, is that which is accompanied with abhorrence of sin; and which, as the sole test of such abhorrence, prompts to *forsake* sin; which for this purpose uses S. Augustine’s ejaculation, *Da quod jubes et jube quod vis*,—that truly evangelic expression of the spirit of the 119th Psalm. The conviction was far worse than useless, which in those ancient heretics referred sin to the necessities of material nature, and the character of the being that created it: and the practical consequence was impious and detestable, whether they were led by this principle to attempt the extinction of the body, or to abandon themselves recklessly, while in the body, to its inevitable corruption. I am far from wishing to impute the last dreadful course to any, who truly believe in the good God that made them, and acknowledge His holy Scriptures as the rule of life: but on the tendency of the dogmatic principles that are brought into comparison with such views, I may and

must speak. In the least obnoxious interpretation that I can possibly give to that most antichristian precept *Pecca fortiter*,—i.e. the least inclusive of *anticipatory* complacency in sin,—I believe that its spirit, if it could be realized in any, (as it was but very partially realized in its author,) would be a truly undesirable and wretched substitute for the most defective view of human sinfulness that either Pelagianism or Pharisaic Judaism could furnish.

Need I repeat that the accusation preferred against the man who inserted this sentiment in a letter, is not that which Archdeacon Hare meets in p. 791, as though the alleged purpose of writing were *Come, brother, let us wallow in sin*? No one, as far as I am aware, has alleged this. For my own part I believe that Luther was restrained from such (too consistent) exemplification of his own doctrinal maxim by something better than the reason here relied on for his vindication, I mean the fear that his enemies might in that case exult over him and his friend; (the reason by which many who talk of the desirableness of *not disgracing the Gospel*, evince their defective apprehension of the real evangelic truth, that right practice is of the *essence* of the religion which it adorns.) I believe that he had a love of the Divine law on its own account, quite sufficient to prevent his antinomianism from being thus practical; and that the better statements which may be found abundantly in his writings, would more truly express his own personal feeling concerning sins like these, than the false and furious dogmatisms to which he has given such frequent and reckless utterance. But I do not think the responsibility the less awful of one who has deliberately propounded that sentiment, as what was proper for his friend "to HOLD and TEACH" (p. 791); and who has in fact taught thousands to imagine, that thus to put matters is to extol the riches of Divine grace and goodness. Neither, while fully conceding to Archdeacon Hare, that Luther did not *desire* the practical realization of his hypothetical abomination, can I possibly concede that, barring the hyperbole, he meant to represent the case as an impossible one: or as one which, if realized, would be otherwise than illustrative of his view of the Gospel. The emphasis repeatedly laid on such statements shows too plainly, that

it was no dialectic sport, (p. 795 H.) but a weighty religious proposition, that he wished to exhibit. And so thinking, I believe we cannot too strongly denounce that mode of contradistinguishing things once deemed identical, justifying faith and obedience, from which such deductions seemed to him and others to follow as by logical consequence : a mode of thought (as unknown to Augustine as to Kempis, and to S. Paul as to either,) by which men are led to conceive the practical as a beggarly element, or of second-rate consideration in religion ; and to see something Judaical or apart from the highest spirituality, in parts even of the Christian Scriptures which bear most strongly the peculiar mark and impress of the Spirit of CHRIST.

To the discussion which I now close, I should not have been led, had not the expression of this decided conviction, when an admired name was concerned, been charged on me as a *moral* offence. I must not omit to acknowledge the laudatory expressions with which this unexpected charge was accompanied : whether well and judiciously bestowed or not, they were kindly meant, and therefore deserve my thanks. I hope it is not ungracious to add, that the admonition to observe rules which I do not believe myself to have violated, would have come with greater force from one whose own tone towards those who have the misfortune to differ from him were more marked with equity and moderation. I suspect that among those who most agree with Archdeacon Hare, the best would not be sorry to see in him a somewhat different style of controversy ; a greater reluctance to arrogate the province of moral judgment ; and a more discriminating, as well as a less profuse, employment of vituperative phrases. For myself, who have suffered far less in this respect than others, I heartily wish the Archdeacon a better cause for the exercise of his learning and energy than that on which he has made it my very unpleasing duty to contend with him.*

* I purposely reserve to a more fitting place a subject, as irrelevant to the present note as to Archdeacon Hare's Note W., which he inserts there at the front of his remarks upon me. Though belonging to a matter in which I readily acknowledge his superior acquaintance with the materials of judgment,—his attack on that score is not a whit more just and reasonable than that which I have repelled in the preceding pages.

NOTE B. (on Sermon IV., p. 79, &c.)

The progress of legendary belief concerning S. John, and the interpretation which our LORD's last mysterious words to him were to receive in his destiny, is a matter of considerable curiosity and importance. As an example of the manner in which fancies, or loose conclusions from inspired premises, may be accumulated on a basis of truth, until in a process now miscalled *development* a genuine tradition may be replaced by one not only different but contradictory,—it may furnish an instructive counterpart to other instances more intimately connected with primary dogmatic faith, and with which it is indeed in some degree actually associated.

Of the most ancient belief on this subject, there can be no doubt, as represented in ecclesiastical history and the testimonies of the Fathers : viz. that the Apostle died a natural death* in that city of Asia Minor, in which he had fixed his constant residence after his exile. The oldest and most decisive testimony is that of Polycrates, Bishop of that city in the second century, who in his Synodical Epistle on the observance of Easter, to Pope Victor and the Roman Clergy, states it as a known fact that S. John fell asleep at Ephesus, οὗτος ἐν Ἐφέσῳ κεκοίμηται† : his remains being understood to rest there at the time of the third General Council,

* There are but few, and those later writers, who in consequence of our LORD's address to the two brothers, conceive S. John, like S. James, to have tasted the cup of actual martyrdom. Among these is the Syrian Jacobite historian Gregory Abu'lfarage, or Bar-Hebræus, who writes that the Apostle John suffered in Trajan's persecution, equally with Simeon son of Clopas, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Ignatius of Antioch. (Greg. Bar-Hebr. Chronicon Syriac., tom. ii. p. 56, ed. Bruns et Kirsch. Lips. 1788.) This opinion has also been ascribed to S. Chrysostom on account of some expressions in his commentary on Matt. xx. 23 : but without sufficient reason.

† Ap. Euseb. Hist. Ecc. lib. v. cap. 24. See also lib. iii. cap. 1, where it is questioned whether Origen also is not cited by Eusebius for the same fact.

and both before and after that period.* The same testimony to the natural decease of the Apostle is borne by those who, after S. Irenæus, the pupil of his disciple S. Polycarp, speak of his having lived to the days of Trajan :† and it was unquestioned in the age of Tertullian, who states that though the beloved disciple had been falsely expected *before* his death, to have been reserved to the Second Advent alive like Enoch and Elias, yet he endured the common lot of humanity. *Obiit et Joannes, quem in adventum Domini remansurum frustra fuerat spes* : (de Anima, cap. 50.) The same undoubted persuasion is visible in others, who connect the placidity of the Apostle's demise with particulars of a wonderful and almost miraculous nature : as S. Epiphanius, who states him to have obtained this wonderful rest by extraordinary prayers from GOD, (διὰ ἰδίας εὐχῆς τὴν κοίμησιν αὐτοῦ ἐκπληκτον ἀπεργάσαμενος, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐκ Θεοῦ λαβὼν τὴν χάριν,) yet not on this account to be adored more than Elias who was alive ; as he urges against the Collyridian heretics, those very moderate precursors of the *hyperdulia* since directed to the Blessed Virgin. (Hæres. 79.) The narrative of this Κοίμησις, or Rest of S. John, though numbered among apocryphal writings by S. Augustine, is considered by him as not altogether unworthy of credit : being expressly distinguished from other accounts, which had begun in his time to have currency in the Church, and which he solidly refutes ; the accounts that would represent the Apostle as literally asleep, and thus awaiting in life the second coming of his LORD. But this will

* Dionysius Alexandr. de Apocalypsi, (who writes that there was another tomb in Ephesus beside that of the Apostle, bearing the name also of John, which he ascribes to the Divine who wrote the Apocalypse,) ap. Euseb. H. E. l. vii. c. 25. The Council of Ephesus, without making any such distinction, represents itself as assembled where was the corpse of the deceased Divine and Evangelist, and was so addressed from Rome by Pope Celestine—*cujus* (Joannis) *reliquias præsentēs veneramini*—as also by S. Cyril of Alexandria and Theodotus of Ancyra on the spot, discoursing on the festival of the Apostle's departure. (Acta S. Concilii Ephes.) S. Chrysostom (Homil. 26 in Epist. ad Hebræos) says, "The graves of Peter and Paul, and John and Thomas are notorious : but those of the others are unknown."

† Adv. Hæreses, lib. ii. cap. 39, et apud Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. cap. 23.

perhaps be clearer by producing this apocryphal narrative as it is yet extant among the Armenians ; a copy of which, accompanied with an English version, was given to me in India by the deacon Mesrop David. The writing has in it, amidst some marks of an origin not quite Apostolical, some no less clear indications of an age not later than the third century ; amongst which I would place the total absence of those additional fabulous circumstances with which its story was adulterated even in early times.

THE LAST REST OF S. JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST,

Quem tradunt etiam (quod in quibusdam Scripturis, quamvis Apocryphis, refertur) quando sibi fieri jussit sepulchrum, incolumem fuisse præsentem, eoque effosso et diligentissime præparato, ibi se tanquam in lectulo collocasse. (D. Aug. Tractat. 124 in Evangel. Joan.)

*The blessed John was with the brethren, greatly rejoicing in the LORD. And on a certain LORD's day, when all the brethren were gathered around him, he thus spake to them. "Brethren and fellow servants, co-heirs and partakers of the kingdom of the LORD, ye know what powers GOD hath imparted to you through my hands, what signs and wonders, what authorities and ministries, what doctrines and communications, what graces and gifts,

** The so called *Apostolic History of Abdias first bishop of Babylon*, (ap. Fabric. Cod. Apocryph. N. T. p. 581, seq.) and the book called *Passio S. Joannis Evangelistæ*, which bears the false name of Mellitus, Bishop of Laodicæa, (ap. Florentin. Not. in Martyrolog. vetus, p. 130, etc.,) relate also this assembly of the brethren on the LORD's day, and this same address of the Apostle to them. But both of these prefix the following miraculous particulars, unknown to the older Apocryphal book. "When John was ninety-seven years old, the LORD JESUS CHRIST appeared to him with his disciples, and said, 'Come to me, for it is time that thou shouldst feast at my banquet with thy brethren.' But when the Apostle arose at the call, the LORD said to him, 'On the LORD's day of my resurrection, which is now five days hence, so shalt thou come to me;' and having so said He was received into heaven. Therefore when the Sunday dawned, the whole multitude was assembled in the Church which had been built in his (John's) name : where after the mysteries of GOD had been celebrated from cock-crowing even to the third hour, he then addressed them thus, 'Brethren and fellow servants, &c. &c.'"

The address nearly corresponds in both those spurious writings : except

how many and how great they are, such as these mortal eyes cannot see, nor these ears hear. Be ye now therefore strengthened in Him, remembering Him in all your doings. Know ye not the mystery of the dispensation made by Him to men, and for what intent He made it? The Lord Himself beseeches you, brethren, to abide in the same without offence, without strife, without exorbitancy. (For He knoweth the offences which come by you: the reproach produced when ye are faithless and wanton, in swerving from His holy commandments. But let not Him, the benefactor, the merciful, the compassionate, the benignant, the holy and immaculate, the immaterial, the sole immutable One, the true, the long-suffering, even my God JEsus, who surpasses all visible and comprehensible names, be grieved with you.) Let Him be pleased rather with our good profession, let Him rejoice in our holy lives, let Him be refreshed by our sober conversation; let our moderation tranquillize, our unity delight, our diligence content, Him; let our love of Him impart to Him joy and satisfaction. These things I now speak to you, brethren, as hastening to the advancement of the work lying before you,—which work is even now perfect in the Lord. For what have I yet remaining to tell you? Ye have the pledge of your God: ye have the gift of His bounty: ye have the assurance of His future coming: (wherefore if ye sin no more, the sins which ye have committed ignorantly shall be forgiven you: but if knowing Him and receiving mercy from Him, ye then deport yourselves disobediently, your past sins also shall be imputed to you, and ye shall forfeit His mercy.)”*

†Having said these things to them, he prayed thus, “O JEsus, who didst knit an incorruptible crown, uniting many flowers

that they both omit the two warnings against disobedience which I have put in parentheses, () and that the sentence which follows the former, “Let Him be pleased, &c.” is placed by the Pseudo-Abdias at the end, after the mention of the divine pledges (or sacraments): both these remarkable sentences also being omitted by the Pseudo-Mellitus.

†† This prayer, though omitted by the Pseudo-Mellitus in his narrative, is given by the Pseudo-Abdias, p. 583, but with much alteration, which is far from being improvement, of the ancient expression. He had also transferred the image in the first sentence to the preceding exhortation thus; *In*

with Thy own, which is unfading,—Thou who hast sown the seed of Thy saving word in the earth,—who art the only sustainer of Thy servants, and physician who healest gratuitously,—Thou who givest and upbraideest not,—who art of tender mercy and love to men, the only Saviour and the Just,—Thou, even Thou, O LORD JESUS, who art all in all, and everywhere present, protect by Thy bounteous mercy all that trust in Thee,—Thou who knowest all the machinations and forces of our accusing adversary, which he worketh against us continually.”†

‡After this he asked for bread, and uttered these eucharistic words; “What benediction, what oblation, what thanksgiving shall we offer in the breaking of this bread, other than the invocation of Thee, JESU CHRIST? We glorify, O LORD, the name of Thy Father, which Thou hast declared unto us. We glorify the entrance of Thy gate, [the grave and gate of death,]—we glorify Thy resurrection, which was manifested to us,—we glorify Thy way, the seed of Thy word,—Thy grace and the faith in Thee—which is the salt, the incomprehensible pearl and treasure, the net [in which Thou hast inclosed Thy people],—we adore Thy Majesty, who for us wast pleased to become the Son of Man,—in whom is truth, and peace, and knowledge of the commandments, and liberty, and enlargement, and sure refuge. For Thou, O LORD, art the root of immortality, the fountain of incorruption, the foundation of eternity: and Thou wast called by all these names for us, in order that we invoking Thee by them, may apprehend Thy gracious authority, which is not fully perceptible by us in the present life, but is yet in a manner visible to Thy saints, being impressed on Thy sole perfect humanity.” Then having

vobis coronetur ea laurea, quam ipse composuit his floribus quos ipse proprio cruore vestivit.

‡‡ The act of breaking the bread and communicating with the disciples, is related by the Pseudo-Abdias, as here, immediately after the prayer. But he omits altogether the truly liturgical thanksgiving which accompanies the act: with the exception of the noble expression “*Qui radix es immortalitatis et fons incorruptionis, consortium nobis hujus communionis sanctifica;*” which he had inserted, out of its proper place, in the prayer preceding. The whole of this is omitted by the Pseudo-Mellitus.

broken the bread, he gave it to them, praying that every one of the brethren might be worthy of the grace of the Lord and of the Holy Communion; he likewise receiving the same, and saying "Beloved, let me be partaker with you."†

He then said to Byrrhus, "Take two of the brethren and thy two sons, with digging implements, and follow me." Whereupon Byrrhus without delay performed all that John the servant of God commanded him. And when the blessed John came forth from the house, and was before the door, he desired the multitude to depart from him. And having come near to the sepulchre of one of our brethren, he said to the young men; "Sons, dig here;" and while they were doing so, he urged them to make it deep enough. And he then exhorted those who had accompanied him thither from the house, speaking to them the word of life, edifying and confirming them in the power of the Lord, and praying for each singly: yet we could not comprehend the intent of all that he said.

When the young men had finished digging the grave, he put off the robes with which he was clothed, and laid them in the cavern as though it were a bed, and having on his inner garment only, he lifted up his hands and betook himself to prayer. †"O Thou who hast called us to the Apostolate of the Gentiles,—O

** What follows of the direction to Byrrhus, the exit, and the digging of the grave in a cemetery without Ephesus, is also in the Pseudo-Abdias, whose narrative (Fabric. p. 584,) may be corrected from this. There is no doubt that we should read *unius* for *unus* in line 10 of that account; for it is clearly S. John who says, *Fodite filioli*. I am not so clear whether the *cum duobus cophinis* of that statement, or the *cum duobus filiis* of the above Armenian version of the story, be the true reading.

But for all this the Pseudo-Mellitus, evidently to favour some more recent local legend, has substituted the digging of a grave *within the Church*, which he had made (as well as Pseudo-Abdias, instead of the Apostle's house,) the scene of the exhortation in the first paragraph, pp. 149, 150.

†† This part of the Apostle's prayer at the grave is omitted by the Pseudo-Mellitus: but it is given by the Pseudo-Abdias, (pp. 584, 5,) in a form slightly different from this, and in the style of a later age; ending thus, "*Suscipe tandem Joannis tui animam, quem cito elegisti, sero adsumpisti.*"

GOD who hast sent us into the world,—who didst of old manifest Thyself by the Prophets,—who regardest and preservest the meanest,—who hast in every nature revealed Thy glory, even in the brute creation,—O Thou who hast tamed the wildest spirits, causing them to be wise and temperate,—Thou who satisfiest the thirsty soul with Thy word,—who didst awaken the dead,—who hast revealed Thyself in love as a Saviour to him who was sunk in trespasses and sins, whom Satan had deprived of Thee,—Thou vanquisher of the adversary, who didst give Thy hand to Thy rescued servant, raising him from conversation with infernal natures, and not leaving him to suffer in the flesh for his sins, after Thou hadst shown him his enemy,—O JESUS, my GOD, who hast made clear the knowledge of Thyself,—Source of super-celestial being and Lord of the terrestrial,—the animating Spirit of ethereal natures, and Ruler of the corporeal,—Protector of those who dwell on earth, and dread of the realms beneath,—receive the soul of Thy John; may it be acceptable in Thy sight !†

‡“O Thou who hast kept me from unchastity, making all wanton regards grievous to me,—who redeeming me from temporal life, hast led me upwards to Thy life which is everlasting, keeping far from me the uncleanness of the flesh, rescuing me from the body of death, and strengthening me in Thee,—Thou who hast repressed in me secret sins, and destroyed their outward operations,—who hast crushed and expelled from me the deceiving adversary,—who hast caused my ways to be directed to Thee, and kept my course without fainting to the end,—who hast vouchsafed to me the irreprovable faith in Thyself, and established in me the true knowledge of Thee,—Thou who rewardest every man according to his works,—Thou who hast put it into my heart to covet nothing more worthy than Thyself,—do Thou, O LORD JESUS CHRIST,

‡‡ This second part of the Apostle's last prayer is interpolated by the Pseudo-Abdias, after the first sentence, by a reference to the fable of S. John having been called from his bride at the nuptial feast of Cana, in Galilee. And in the part which follows that reference, (pp. 586, 7, 8,) and in which there is once more a verbal correspondence with the Pseudo-Mellitus, both depart very considerably from the terms of the prayer as here given.

since I have now accomplished the ministration that I have received of Thee, make me a meet receiver of Thy eternal peace, Thy unfailing mercy, Thy unspeakable salvation! And in my approach to Thee, let darkness be removed, let Hades be vanquished, the furnace quenched, Gehenna subdued: let the angels of the evil one be confounded, their leaders terrified, their principalities abased, their powers discomfited. Comfort those who are on Thy right hand, and let those who are on the left be rooted out; let the Accuser be silenced and put to confusion, his wrathful malignity annihilated, and his instruments of assault and vexation removed for ever to the region of dismay and sadness. And grant that I may irreprehensibly and unfailingly continue my ways even unto Thee, and receive the things which Thou hast promised to those who have walked uprightly, and unfeignedly loved Thee.”† *Then he wholly sealed himself with the sacred sign, and with the words “Be Thou, O LORD JESU CHRIST, with me,” stretched himself in the cavern where he had deposited his upper garments, and said, “Brethren, farewell.” And thus while we were both rejoicing and lamenting, S. John the Apostle and Evangelist resigned his soul into the LORD’s hand.* To JESUS CHRIST be glory, honour and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

Thus ends the Rest of S. John.

** This conclusion of the history is given also by the pretended Abdias, (Fabr. pp. 588, 9.) But both he and the Pseudo-Mellitus add the story of a supernatural light resting on the Apostle before his self-deposition, such as no mortal eye could bear. The latter says also (like Nicephorus ii., c. 42, whose account may be compared with this,) that when the disciples repaired the next day to the grave, nothing was found there but manna: which the place yields to this day, endued with supernatural medicinal properties. Pseudo-Abdias on the other hand says that the said miraculous manna burst forth as soon as the Apostle expired, and says nothing of the body’s disappearance: implying rather by his citation of our LORD’s promise, John xxi. 22, as fulfilled by the Apostle lying rather asleep than dead in his grave, that he adheres to the older depravation of this legend, (p. 156—8, inf.)

The identity of this remarkable narrative with the apocryphal book mentioned by the Bishop of Hippo, is argued as well from the correspondence of the particulars, as from their not proceeding beyond the point of a placid but most real decease, to which the Apostle without pain composed himself as to a sleep,—a sleep not to be broken till the general resurrection. For few comparatively of those in later times who have adverted to the Apostle's rest, have been content with so representing the matter. Among these however, we may mention beside our venerable Bede, (who in his commentary on S. John merely repeats S. Austin,) the author of the Preface to S. John's Epistles and Apocalypse, which in many copies of the Vulgate bore the name of S. Jerome;* also in the ninth century, Smaragdus, Abbot of S. Michael, in his commentary on the Epistles and Gospels of the year,† Haymo Bishop of Halberstadt in his Ecclesiastical History,‡ Ado, Archbishop of Vienne, in his chronicle,§ and Notkerus Balbulus, Monk of S. Gall, in his Martyrology,|| where beside the

* Hic est Joannes, qui sciens supervenisse sibi diem egressionis de corpore, convocatis in Epheso discipulis, descendit in defossum sepulturæ suæ locum, orationeque completa reddidit spiritum, tam a dolore mortis terrestri extraneus, quam a corruptione carnis noscitur alienus. (Vid. Apocalyps. ed. Matthiæ, p. 11.)

† Sic in Patrum literis invenimus: cum longo confectus senio, &c. &c., (nearly as in the preceding extract.) (Fol. 11, ed. Ulrich. Argent. 1536.)

‡ Lib. iii. c. 21, (Joannes) post longa magnæ continentiæ et sobrietatis tempora, post insignem Evangelii prædicationem, post incredibilium signorum virtutes, tandem effodi sibi jussit sepulchrum.

§ Joannes Apostolus LXVIIIvo anno post passionem Christi, ætatis autem suæ XCVIIIvo, Ephesi placida morte quievit. (Bibliothec. Patrum, tom. xvi. p. 789.)

|| VII. Id. Julii. In Epheso dormitio B. Joannis Apostoli et Evangelistæ. . . Cum igitur LXVIIIvo post passionem Domini anno, sciret imminere recessus sui diem, convocatis discipulis suis, inter sacra Missarum Dei solennia, de contemptu mundi et concupiscentiarum ejus, ac de observatione mutæ charitatis, iterato atque frequentato sermone eos admonere non destitit. . . Et his dictis, data omnibus pace, et tam semetipso quam illis Domini corporis et sanguinis sacramento communitis, reclinavit se in sepulchro quasi in lecto, tam liber a dolore mortis, quam immunis creditur a contagio corruptionis. (Canisii Lect. Antiq. tom. ii. pars iii. p. 144, ed. Basnage.)

particulars mentioned by others connected with this self-burial of the Apostle, that also of the Holy Communion is mentioned, of which he partook with his disciples. And these adherents to the older tradition on the subject, are all from the West. Some pilgrim travellers also have been found, even in the fourteenth century, who mention the tomb of S. John at Ephesus, as the monument of his undoubted decease and ordinary burial.*

But other stories were produced by the desire to find a meaning for our LORD's mysterious intimation. The first of these is that which would represent S. John as corporeally alive in his Ephesian tomb, and the heaving earth as bearing witness to his living slumber. This revolting notion had begun to gain currency in the time of S. Augustine: and its relation to the older tradition, of which we have already produced him as a witness, cannot be better stated, than by translating the whole passage from his Exposition of John xxi., in which the reference is contained. After interpreting our LORD's words to S. Peter concerning his brother Apostle as hypothetical, and proving it from the careful limitation of the words made by the Apostle and Evangelist himself in v. 23, he thus proceeds; "But he who is determined may yet hold out and say that though it be true, as John says, that the LORD did not expressly state he should not die, yet the thing is indicated by the words He is recorded to have used: he may assert that the Apostle John yet lives, and in that sepulchre which is still seen at Ephesus, lies asleep rather than dead. He may even argue for this that the *ground there is said to heave at intervals, and bubble up as it were*; and he may assert with constancy or pertinacity, that this is *by the Apostle's breathing*. For there can never be wanting persons who will so believe, if there are those who assert Moses also to be alive, because it is said that the place of his sepulture is not to be found, and because he appeared on the mount with our LORD, as did Elias, who died not, but was carried away. . . . For if some thus deny Moses to be dead, whom the Scripture itself, though stating

* Vid. Guil. de Baldensel. Eq. Aur. Hierosol. Hodeporicon in Terr. Sanct. (Canisii L. A. tom. iv. p. 338.)

that his burial place is unknown, yet unambiguously mentions as having died : how much more might it be thought* of John, on occasion of his LORD's saying ' If I will that he tarry till I come,' that he should merely sleep in his grave ? Of him it is recorded in certain Scriptures, though Apocryphal, that *he was present and sound when he ordered his sepulchre to be made for him : and when it was dug and made ready with great care, there laid himself down as in a bed and IMMEDIATELY EXPIRED.* But according to their sentiment who so understand the LORD's words, the tradition is that he did not expire, but *lay down as dead, and was buried when asleep ; and thus remaining till CHRIST come, indicates his life by the heaving of the dust,* which dust is thought to be propelled by his breath from the bottom to the surface of the grave. Against this opinion I think it needless to contend. Let those who know the spot tell whether the earth does as they say ; for in truth it is not from light persons that we have heard this." He goes on to remark most truly, that if this were indeed so, a far greater wonder would be found in the circumstance that CHRIST should grant to his best beloved disciple as a special favour, to remain under ground in the body to the end of the world ; when to S. Peter He had accorded just before as a mark of His love that which S. Paul most ardently desired,—to be released from the body and

* I will remark here, that it is utterly without foundation that S. Hilary of Poitiers has been supposed to have entertained the opinion of S. John being yet alive in the body. When in his sixth book on the Trinity, he is showing that the faith of S. Peter's confession, i.e., the faith of the Church, is that of a *consubstantial* Son of the living GOD, he uses these expressions, " Proferamus itaque omnes Apostolicæ fidei professiones, in quibus Dei Filium confitentes non adoptionis in eo nomen, sed naturæ proprietatem confitentur ; neque creationis in eo ignobilitatem, sed nativitatis gloriam protestantur. Loquatur Joannes sic usque ad adventum Domini manens, et sub sacramento divinæ voluntatis relictus deputatus, dum non mori dicitur et manere. Loquatur ergo sua ut solet voce, DEUM NEMO VIDIT UNQUAM, NISI, &c. &c." Is it not abundantly clear, even if the particle *sic* did not express it, that the abiding presence of S. John, to which the Gallic Bishop accommodates the Divine promise, is a presence *in his writings*, by which he, being dead, yet speaketh ?

The reasons adduced for ascribing the same opinion severally to S.

to be with СХРИСТ. And rather than conclude this to be the case, he would conceive the heaving of the ground, if proved to be real, as rather a divine indication of the preciousness of that saint's death, whom no stroke of martyrdom had removed; or as allowed for some other unknown reason, consistent with the belief of his actual decease.

To this strange legend of the Apostle, as yet breathing in his living sepulture, another embellishment (or disfigurement) of the account contained in the Apocryphal book, was added not long after the time of S. Augustine: viz. that fragrance issued from the tomb in which the wondering disciples had seen their master composed to rest, and that manna sprung up and yet grows there. Thus is the matter represented in the fifth century by Gregory of Tours, who in his history of the Franks, (lib. i. cap. 24,) relates S. John's self-deposition in the tomb, and his continuance there alive in supposed verification of his LOKD's promise: adding to this fable in his discourse on the Glory of the Martyrs (lib. i. c. 30) an account of the miraculous virtue of the manna proceeding from the tomb that was thus honoured with a living tenant.* The same appears to have been the general belief in the West, when our countryman S. Willibald and his companions visited this grave and other places in Asia Minor and Palestine A.D. 765: though a discrepancy in the accounts renders it at least extremely doubtful, whether we have their testimony to this particular legend.†

Ambrose and S. Jerome are equally unfounded. (Tillemont, *Memoires Ecclesiastiques*, tom. i. pp. 608, 9.) It is not till a full century after, and in a different portion of the Church, that we see the first *respectable* authorities for that sentiment. (See Note * on p. 160 inf.)

* Gregorii Turonensis Opera, p. 21 C, et p. 753 AB, ed. Ruinart, Paris. 1699.—Of this manna, which was celebrated by the Greeks on their festival of S. John on the 8th of May, and the medicinal virtues ascribed to it, an account is given from their Synaxarium by F. Combefis. *Bibl. Patr. Auctarium*, par. 1. p. 485, (Par. 1672.)

† Of the three lives of this distinguished traveller which we have in the collection of Canisius, (tom. ii. pars 1, p. 106—117, et p. 117—122, et tom. iii. p. 16—19, ed. Basnage,) of which the first and last are by known authors,—the first by his kinswoman, a nun of Heidenheim, the last and shortest by his successor in the See of Aichstadt,—it is only the second anonymous

But another very different version of the story had before this time gained currency both in the East and West, though unknown to the age of S. Augustine : viz. that the blessed Apostle's body was translated to heaven from the tomb where it had been deposited, and that the aforesaid manna served to indicate the place where it had been, but was now no more. The oldest mention of this now extant is by Ephraem, (not the great Syrian Father so named, but) a Patriarch of Antioch in the sixth century ; who in answering a scholastic question put to him how we know that S. John yet lives, says that the Evangelist had never died, consequently had not yet attained to the resurrection from the dead, but that he should die at the end of the world, and then rise with all the rest of the saints : but having given this strange modification of the preceding legend as his own answer, he then states the very different opinion which I have just mentioned, as one which had been then received by many on the authority of some Apocryphal Acts of S. John, and which though very improbable, is yet tolerable in his judgment.* But the principal support biography, entitled *Vita seu potius Itinerarium S. Willibaldi*, that mentions this miraculous manna, " Transitio Choo Samoque insulis, tabentes salo artus apud Ephesum Asiæ insulam exponunt : ubi postquam *ad sepulchrum S. Joannis Evangelistæ, ebulliens inde manna admirantes lachrymis perfunderunt*, postquam se Septem Dormientibus, et Mariæ Magdalensæ ibidem requiescenti commendaverunt, &c. &c." But the first authentic life, from which that author derives all his facts, and from which he has evidently taken this, only smoothing the style at the expense of the right order, and of topographical correctness, (as any one may find who will compare the above and its context in p. 118 of Canisius, with p. 109 preceding,)—viz., the *Vita seu potius Hodæporicon S. Willibaldi scripta a Consanguinea ejus* &c.,—has merely, after Cos, Samos and Ephesus, and the Seven Sleepers, "*Et inde ambulaverunt ad S. Joannem Evangelistam in loco specioso secus Ephesum*. Et inde, &c. &c." The manna is most probably added from other legendary recollections, by the same anonymous author who has turned the city into an island, and misplaced and misnamed other places in the very circumstantial and measured Itinerary before him.

* Ephraem Resp. ad Anatolium Scholast. ap. Phot. Bibliothec., Cod. 229 :—
 Ταύτη τῇ δόξῃ συνάδουσι καὶ αἱ Πράξεις τοῦ ἡγαπημένου Ἰωάννου, καὶ ὁ βίος,
 ὃς οὐκ ὀλίγοι προφέρουσι. κατατεθεὶς γάρ, φασί, κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου
 προτροπὴν ἐν τίνι τόπῳ, ζήτηθεὶς αἰφνίδιον οὐχ εὗρίσκετο· ἀλλὰ μόνον τὸ ὄγλισμα

of this ulterior fancy, and which soon elevated it from the rank of a merely tolerated speculation to one repeated and sanctioned by teachers of name and authority in the Church, was the legend of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, to which the similar assumption of her divinely appointed guardian and adoptive son was esteemed a suitable corollary. Accordingly, the next most ancient record, after Ephraem,* of the latter fable, is that same supposititious epistle which attempted to attach the name of S. Jerome to the former: viz. the Discourse to Paula and Eustochium on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which Erasmus, clearly

βρόνον ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ τόπου ἐν ᾧ πρὸς βραχεῖαν ῥοπήν ἐτέθη' ἀφ' οὗ πάντες ὡς ἁγιασμοῦ πηγὴν τὸ ἅγιον ἐκεῖνο μῦθον ἀρυόμεθα. 'Εκεῖνο δὲ δῆλον, ὡς τὸ παρὸν ζήτημα καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας παρασφαλῇ, οὐ φέρει ψυχῆς κίνδυνον. This speculation, of which the Antiochian patriarch is content to say that it does not endanger the salvation of those who receive it, was evidently unknown in the fourth century, as well as the pretended Life of S. John that contained it.

* An older authority has been indeed pretended for this opinion,—that of Hippolytus, Bishop and Martyr in the reign of Alexander Severus: because in a work ascribed to him on the End of the World and Antichrist, § 21, (p. 14 ed. Fabric.) S. John is represented as reserved, together with Enoch and Elias, till the second coming of the Lord, which they are to prepare, as John the Baptist prepared the first. But the work that contains that strange statement is acknowledged by all critics to belong to a later Hippolytus of Thebes in the eighth century, not to S. Hippolytus of Portus in the third; who in his genuine work on Antichrist, § 31, shows manifestly that no such thing was dreamed of in his day: for he there apostrophizes S. John together with Jeremiah and Daniel as now dead with CHRIST, but to live with Him *hereafter*; *'Απεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ· ζήσεσθι δὲ σὺν Χριστῷ* (p. 16 ed. Fabric. Hamburg, 1716.) It is to the *later* Hippolytus that we are to ascribe the conclusion of the account of S. John in the short book on the XII Apostles, to the above effect, *'Επὶ Τραϊάνου ἐκοιμήθη ἐν 'Εφέσῳ· οὗ τὸ λείψανον ζητηθὲν οὐχ εὑρέθη.* Georgius Cedrenus, who in his Compendium of Histories (p. 196 ed. Venet. 1729) cites these as the words of the elder Hippolytus, though living in a later age, when this fable was very commonly received by his fellow Byzantines, yet reasons very truly against it, both historically from the testimony of Polycrates to the burial, without any hint of disappearance or resurrection, and also doctrinally from the fact of *two* witnesses only being mentioned by S. John in the Apocalypse, chap. xi., to prepare the second Advent, without adding himself to Enoch and Elias.

The real precursors of the opinion that the author of the Apocalypse must

seeing the dissimilitude of its Græcizing style to that of Jerome, erroneously ascribed to that Father's friend Sophronius, though it is the work of an author not earlier than the sixth century : (the first apparent citation of it being by Ildephonsus of Toledo in the seventh, and the first certain one by Hincmar in the ninth.) That author having stated it as a matter of pious—though by no means universal or obligatory—belief, that the Virgin's body was risen and glorified, adds “*Quod et de B. Joanne Evangelista ejus ministro, cui virgini a Christo Virgo commissa est, plurimi asseverant ; quia in sepulchro ejus, ut fertur, nonnisi manna invenitur, quod et scaturire cernitur.*” And though even this author seems to leave us free to believe that the Assumption of S. John was that of his soul only, his body continuing inanimate as at its burial,—though even the Visions of S. Brigitt and S. Gertrude give this express account of it, (the former, as so informed by S. John himself, and by the Blessed Virgin, the latter by her Divine Son !*) yet the more fabulous account of the body's disappearance on the very day of interment became gradually supreme in the East, and found approved Doctors also in the West to support it. Notwithstanding the truer opinion which has ever existed among the latter as far as S. John was concerned, we find the above fable

needs remain as a reserved witness to the LORD's second coming, are to be sought in an age between the Hippolyti. A contemporary of Ephraem,—Andrew, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in cap. 29 of his Commentary on the Apocalypse, (p. 44 ed. Sylburg. 1696,) gives this as a probable interpretation of the Angel's words to S. John, Rev. x. 11 ; as does also his successor Arethas in that See, (as cited by Florentin. p. 124,) expounding the words to mean that S. John, without tasting death, should withstand the kingdom of Antichrist before the consummation of all things. And such, according to S. John Damascene in the eighth century, in his Homily on the Transfiguration, was the interpretation, which some of the most judicious (τῶν τῶν λίαν σοφῶν) gave to John xxi. 22, in that day : whence he thinks that our LORD in His declaration Matt. xvi. 28, Mark ix. 1, pointed out S. John in particular. (Jo. Damasc. Opp. to. ii. p. 796 ed. Le Quien.)

* S. Brigitt is represented, Lib. iv. c. 1, as hearing from S. John, “*Ego insuper post Matrem Dei levissima morte de mundo transivi, quia custos Matris Dei factus fui :*” and also as hearing the Virgin thus address him, “*Tu es quem Deo placuit vocare cum levissima morte de mundo propinquius mihi :*

asserted as true, or at least as probable, by Christian Druthmar* of Aquitaine in the ninth century; by Fulbert of Chartres,† and the Cardinal Peter Damian,‡ in the eleventh; and by the no less celebrated Peter Abelard§ in the twelfth: but the writer who at a later period endeavours to establish from the above and other less respectable authorities this interpretation of the notice in the *ego enim quasi obdormivi in separatione animæ et corporis, et evigilavi in gaudio perpetuo.*” This and the other pretended revelation of S. Gertrude are given in p. 120 of the work of Florentin, mentioned in a subsequent note, though not making for his purpose.

* Comm. in Ev. Matthæi (Argent. 1514.) “Sub Trajano requievit (Joannes) in Epheso: sed nunc corpus ejus non invenitur in terra, et apertum est sarcophagum in quo jacuit, sed vacuum est. Ignorant autem quid de eo factum sit, quia ab hominibus non fuit ablatum.”

† Fulbert. Carnotensis Episc. in Serm. de Nativitate Mariæ (Opp. p. 403, ed. Par. 1608.) “Sanctus Joannes sepultus est Epheso. Post vero, cum religiosi Christiani reliquias matris ejus, videlicet Domini, respicere vellent, sepulchrum vacuum invenerunt: et in sepulchro B. Joannis respicientes, non invenerunt nisi manna: credit itaque Christiana pietas, quia *Christus Deus Dei Filius matrem suam gloriose resuscitaverit, et excitaverit super cælos, et quod B. Joannes virgo et Evangelista, qui ei ministravit in terra, gloriam ejus participare mereatur in cælo.*”

‡ Serm. ii. de S. Joanne Apost. et Evangelist.: where having expatiated rhetorically on the manna of the sepulchre, as indicating *probably* but not *certainly*, a resurrection and translation of the body, the preacher concludes, “Unde etsi non audeamus pleniter definire, pium tamen est arbitrari, ut *sicut de beata Dei genitrice creditur, ita etiam B. Joannes jam resurrexisse probabiliter asseratur*: quatenus sicut in virginea fuerunt integritate participes, ita nihilominus et in anticipata resurrectione merito videantur æquales; nec sit in resurrectione diversitas, quibus tanta fuerat unanimitas conversationis in vita.” (Pet. Damiani Ravennatis Opera, tom. ii. p. 188, ed. Rom. 1606.)

§ P. Abelardus de S. Joanne Evang. “Qui et ut voluit et quando voluit, animam suam in manus Dei commendans, tam alienus extitit a dolore mortis quam ignarus fuerat a corruptione carnis. Cujus denique corpus nec corruptione vel putredine corruptum in speciem mannæ perhibetur conversum, ut ex ejus specie munditia carnis probaretur immaculatæ. Quem *nonnulli quoque sanctorum jam gloria resurrectionis donatum astruere non dubitarunt.*” For this the able but uncritical schoolman proceeds to quote as from S. Augustine, a spurious passage most opposed to the real judgment of that Father. (Abelardi et Heloisæ Opp. p. 907 ed Amboes. Par. 1615.)

Roman Martyrology for the 27th of December, *Assumptio S. Joannis Evangelistæ apud Ephesum*, had to maintain his position against Cardinal Baronius.* The case is different with the Greeks : among whom the story of S. John's body having been sought in vain by his disciples the day after his burial, and divinely removed from among men, is not only related as certain fact by Hippolytus of Thebes, Michael Glycas,† and other Byzantine writers, very few of whom express doubt on the subject, but has been inserted in their most authoritative Menologies.‡ There are some variations in the account : some proceeding upon the old history of the Apostle's self-interment at Ephesus :§ while others represent him as disappearing *from Patmos*, and his place nowhere found among men ; from which it was inferred that he was yet alive

* Fr. Mar. Florentinii Notæ in Martyrologium Vetus Hieronymi nomine editum. Lucæ, 1668.

† Annales, pars 3., &c. &c. An older writer, Nicetas David, of the ninth century, not only tells the above legend as certain proof of the Anastasis of S. John in his Encomium of the Apostle, but apostrophizes him as the only one of mere mortals beside the Blessed Virgin, who had yet attained the bodily resurrection to glory ; Χαῖρε τὸν παράδδειςον μόνος νῦν μετὰ σώματος ἅμα τῇ μητρὶ Θεομήτορι κατοικῶν, κἀκείθεν τῷ πνεύματι τὴν ὅλην γῆν καταθεωρῶν. Nicetæ Paphlagonis Orationes Encomiasticæ, ed. Combefis, pp. 363, 4. (Bibl. Patr. Auctarium pars 1. Par. 1672.)

‡ E. g. Menolog. Græc. (Card. Sirleto interprete,) " Sep. 26. *Migratio sancti, gloriosi et celeberrimi Apostoli et Evangelistæ Joannis, cognomento Theologi.*" (Canis. tom. iii. p. 472.) The Abyssinian and Coptic Calendar published by Ludolf, Comm. in Hist. Æthiop. p. 385 seq., contains two festivals of the translation of S. John's body, viz. Sep. 26, and May 11.

§ Pseudo-Dorotheus in Synopsi de Vita ac Morte Prophetarum Apostolorum ac Discipulorum Domini, (in Bibliothec. Patrum, tom. iii.) Ἐξορίσθεις ὑπὸ Τραϊανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν Πάτμῳ τῇ νῆσῳ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Κυρίου, ἐκεῖ συνεγράψατο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον θάπτεται δ' ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἔτι ζῶν Θεοῦ βουλήσει. This is the older phase of the story. But elsewhere we read under the same assumed name of Dorotheus, Bishop and Martyr, and as a supplement to the same work, *de Apostolis et Discipulis Domini*, (ap. Cave, Hist. Lit. p. 104—108,) the following inconsistent statement, only agreeing with the former in the false ascription of the Apostle's banishment to Trajan, instead of Domitian : ὑπὸ Τραϊανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς Πατμόν τὴν νῆσον διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξορίζεται, ἐκ ταύτης μετάρσιος γεγονῶς, διὸ καὶ λόγος κεκράτηκε σὺν τῷ Ἐνῶχ καὶ τῷ Ἡλίῳ ἔτι ἐν σαρκὶ αὐτὸν ὑπάρχειν.

with Enoch and Elias : and this opinion is repeated by the ignorant and semi-barbarous writer John Malela, (on whom Bentley wrote his celebrated epistle,) who tells us moreover, that it was the sentiment of Africanus and Irenæus !* Another Eastern version of the legend is found in the anonymous Arabian biographer of the Evangelists : viz. that the Apostle strictly charged his favourite disciple and amanuensis to let no one know the place of his burial ; which was consequently unknown to all men, like that of Moses : the grave commonly esteemed to be that of the Apostle, (by Polycrates and Dionysius, consequently, and the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus,) not containing him, but that favoured disciple only, his successor in the local episcopate.† A still more extraordinary version of the story (which may be commended to those who laud the religious purity of the heretical communions of the East,) is that of Simeon, a Nestorian Presbyter and Monk of the thirteenth century ; who tells us that the resurrection both of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of S. John, took place three centuries after their deaths, in answer to the

* Joan. Malelæ Chronographia, p. 351 ed. Chilmead, Oxon. 1691.

† Vitæ Evangelistarum iv. p. 53 ed. P. Kirsten, Breslæ, 1608 :—

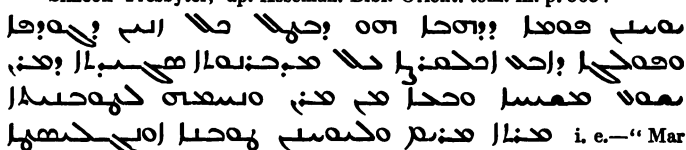
ولما ملك طرايانوس اقام يوحنا في ايامه بافسس
ست سنين ومات بها في رابع طوبه ودفن بها*
فكان حياته مائة سنة وسنة واحدة منها قبل
الصعود ثلثون سنة ومنها بعد الصعود احدي
وسبعون سنة* وكان اوصي فوخير تلميذه الا يعلم
احدا موضع قبره فلم يعلمه احد والمعروف هو
قبر فوخير* وقيل ان يوحنا املي ابوغلبسيس
علي فوخير i. e.—“During the reign of Trajan, John remained six

years (longer) at Ephesus, and died there in the fourth of the (Egyptian) month Tybi, (answering to the Julian Dec. 30,) and was there buried, his age being 101 years, of which thirty were before the ascension of the Lord, and seventy-one after. He had charged Prochorus (?) his disciple, that he should

prayers, and in reward of the merits, of the excellent S. John Chrysostom !*

To return however to objects of more general and prevailing belief. We have seen how the unanimous tradition of the early Church as to the holy Apostle's death and burial and rest in CHRIST till the general resurrection—was displaced, in the minds

inform no one of the place of his burial ; and no one knows it : that which is celebrated as such being the sepulchre of Prochorus (?) ; to whom also John is said to have dictated the Apocalypse." This writer, who is more accurate in his chronology than the Græculi last quoted, seems to have had before him a confused tradition of the statement of Dionysius distinguishing the tomb of the Apostle at Ephesus, and that of the writer of the Apocalypse, and to have made out of it the preceding very different distinction of the Apostle and his amanuensis. This ΠΡΟΧΗΡΑ who is in a preceding sentence coupled with S. Ignatius and S. Polycarp as one of the three most eminent disciples of S. John, might on that account be taken for *Papias* Bishop of Hierapolis, the known Apostolical Father, who is thus classed by S. Jerome (Chron. A.D. 101,) except that the greater number of corresponding letters should rather indicate another disciple of S. John, viz. *Prochorus*, (the distortion being scarcely greater than that of other Greek names in Arabic, as in that of 'Αποκάλυψις in the above sentence ;)—though it is mentioned there that he succeeded the Apostle in the See of Ephesus, (Kirsten. p. 49.)—a particular equally inaccurate respecting both. (Cf. Lampe in Evang. Joan. tom. i. p. 88.)

* Simeon Presbyter, ap. Asseman. Bibl. Orient. tom. iii. p. 563 :  i. e.—“ Mar

John the Golden-mouthed, who refuted all kinds of blasphemies and questionings which the devil had put forth against the adorable dispensation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and who sought and obtained from our LORD that He would resuscitate the blessed Lady Mary, and the blessed Evangelist John.” These wonders are but subsidiary to the author's main story, how S. John's fragment of the original leavened bread received from CHRIST at the Last Supper, and used by him for leavening the bread of all subsequent Eucharists, was to that day religiously reserved for the same purpose by the Nestorian Patriarchs ; as was a portion of the water that issued from the Saviour's side, for baptisms !

of men, curious for a verification of his LORD's mysterious announcement, by two different and incompatible stories ; the one, current in the earlier times, of his living slumber in his recognized tomb, the other of his resuscitation and removal from it. The writers both in the East and West, who like the credulous Nicephorus in the fourteenth century, receive the latter story as fact, are found to quote with apparent concurrence the earlier Fathers' reasonings from John xxi. 23, against so understanding our LORD's mysterious words as to deny the reality of the Apostle's death : without adverting that the whole spirit and even the letter of their argument is far less contravened by the extinct opinion they were combating, than by the extravagant one professed by these later writers, that the Apostle, with the Mother of our LORD, had anticipated the general resurrection.* The Roman Church, which has sanctioned as matter of faith, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin to the throne of heaven, has not so dealt with the minor Assumption of S. John : indeed in the Roman obedience there are some, as Tillemont, who are determined opponents of all the current legends on this subject, as of falsehoods that could never bear a pious character, or serve the cause of religion. But in the view of those who have gone out from us, and who evince a disposition very different from that of the best Roman Catholics upon such matters, there is no reason why these contradictions to primitive antiquity should not be accepted as legitimate developments of doctrine ; or why the verity of S. John's assumption should not be considered even as a logical deduction from that of her to whom the Divine WORD had made him a son. Such proceeding were worthy of those who contend earnestly that what was no part of the original deposit of faith may be made such at

* "We must believe S. John," says Nicephorus, "or rather CHRIST and the wise Chrysostom," in interpreting the promise to S. John as accomplished in his surviving the LORD's coming to destroy Jerusalem, and living even to the time of Trajan. Yet it is immediately after mentioned as essential to the beloved disciple's honour, that his attainment of immortality should precede that of the general body of the faithful ! Niceph. Callist. Hist. Ecc. lib. ii. cap. 42, (tom. i. pp. 208, 9, ed. Ducæi, Par. 1630.)

the present or any future time : and who, as the most decisive example of this, anticipate with undisguised pleasure* the coming sanction, as an article of faith, of the Virgin Mary's conception without sin. From that moment, it seems that it will be *heresy* to adopt the sentiments and arguments of S. Bernard and S. Thomas Aquinas on that matter ; and the Catholic world will be called on to surrender and deny, on the pain of anathema, what all the Fathers of the Church esteemed the Blessed Virgin's incommunicable and most sacred prerogative, that of *the sole immaculate MATERNITY* ; to declare that it was shared by the Virgin's wedded mother ; and why not eventually by her mother also, and the mother of Joachim, and so on without limit ? For who can set any limit to the developments of presumptuous disquisition on the text, that to educe a clean thing from an unclean is impossible ? And (to return to the subject of this note,) who can restrain the pagan process of *deification*, as it is unscrupulously termed, from proceeding from the Mother of the Divine Saviour to one so specially honoured in reference to her, as S. John ?

* See Dublin Review, for December, 1847. Art. *Brownson on Developments* : particularly pp. 388—390.

ERRATA.

	For	Read
p. 133, line 14,	Rom. vii.	Rom. viii.
p. 136, last line (note)	<i>rail at Abraham</i>	<i>rail against Abraham</i>

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